Preface

This book is a history of Europe from 1815 to 1914, following on sequentially in the Penguin History of Europe from the previous volume in the series, *The Pursuit of Glory* (2007), which covers the period 1648 to 1815. As the author of that brilliant book, my Cambridge colleague Tim Blanning, remarks, every history of Europe has to start at some arbitrary date, but some dates are more arbitrary than others. We speak habitually of 'the nineteenth century' or 'the twentieth century', but historians know that the period 1801 to 1900 or 1901 to 2000 has no real meaning beyond the merely chronological. History is full of loose ends, and even the outbreak and conclusion of major wars that so often provide the terminal dates for histories covering discrete segments of the European past, including this one, leave many issues unresolved. Different aspects of history have different chronologies, and a date that has a meaning in political or military or diplomatic history may have very little significance in social or economic or cultural history. French historians of the *Annales* school have become accustomed to speaking of an *immobile history* which persisted well into modern times in many parts of Europe, so that despite the fall of the *ancien régime* in European political systems at the end of the eighteenth century, the *ancien régime économique et social* persisted well into the second half of the nineteenth century. It took until this point, for example, for serfdom to disappear from the scene in most of Europe, while the long-established demographic pattern of high birth rates and high death rates did not begin to change, except in France, until the so-called 'demographic transition' of the decades after 1850. On the other hand, industrialization was a marginal process confined to small pockets of the European economy until the same period. Some historians, indeed – notably Arno Mayer in his book *The Persistence of the Ancien Régime* (1981) – have argued that the dominance of traditional aristocratic elites remained all the way up to the First World War, so that not much of significance changed in the political sphere either, despite all the surface turmoil of the era. But Mayer's view has not been widely accepted by

historians: change there certainly was in nineteenth-century Europe, not just in politics but in other spheres of life as well.

Some, indeed, have decided that the most meaningful period to study is the *Age of Revolution*, to quote the title of the first volume of Eric Hobsbawm's survey of the years 1789 to 1914, published in 1962. Hobsbawm's periodization was followed by Jonathan Sperber in his *Revolutionary Europe* (2000), covering the years 1789–1848, the same period as Hobsbawm's first volume. Yet there is a price to pay for choosing these years, for what came after was a very different Europe, one much less easy to conceptualize in a single framework. Not by chance, Sperber's follow-up volume has a wordy title that conveys, no doubt unconsciously, the difficulty he encountered in finding a unifying theme: *Europe 1850–1914: Progress, Participation and Apprehension* (2008). Hobsbawm went on to write two more volumes, *The Age of Capital* (1975) covering the years 1848 to 1875, and *The Age of Empire* (1987), taking the story up to the First World War. Anyone who attempts to write a history of nineteenth-century Europe has to confront these three magnificent books, which tower over the literature on the period. And, with his uncanny gift for conceptual innovation, Hobsbawm went on to characterize the whole period covered by his trilogy as 'the long nineteenth century', a model followed by many textbooks and primers, for example William Simpson and Martin Jones's *Europe 1783–1914* (2000). The long nineteenth century is, however, a broken-backed century, divided into two very different halves by the 1848 Revolutions. Not surprisingly, like Sperber, many historians covering the period from the French Revolution or the defeat of Napoleon to the First World War have given up the attempt to find any kind of conceptual unity, and have chosen anodyne titles such as *Europe's Uncertain Path* (2012), to quote R. S. Alexander's recent political narrative.

Through most of the twentieth century, historians regarded the rise of nation states and the conflicts between them as the central features of European history in the nineteenth century. The triumph of nationalism forged new political and cultural entities and inspired revolts against large and, it seemed, outmoded multinational empires, revolts against oppression by other nationalities or ambitions to achieve dominance over them. This model of the nation state was exported across the globe in the twentieth century, making its emergence in Europe in the nineteenth seem even more important. Historians once saw this process in positive terms, putting celebratory accounts of the unification of Italy and Germany, the growth of Czech and Polish national consciousness, and other products of the age of nationalism at the centre of their narrative. As national and ethnic rivalries spilled over into the vast conflagration of the Second World War, however, the rise of nationalism appeared in a darker light, a view underlined by the Balkan wars of the 1990s. But since then we have come increasingly to live in an age of globalization, as the barriers created by the Cold War have crumbled, international institutions, worldwide means of communication, multinational companies, and many other influences have eroded national boundaries and begun to bind us all together as a global human community. Since the turn of the century, this has also altered our vision of the past, which historians have come to see increasingly in a global perspective. The call for the writing of global history is not in itself new: it was issued as long ago as the 1970s by the French historian Marc Ferro and was present in the concept of *Universalgeschichte* (universal history) as practised by Leopold von Ranke in the nineteenth century or Arnold Toynbee and William H. McNeill in the twentieth. But a global history that links the different parts of the world rather than telling their discrete stories has emerged only recently, as historians have begun to examine subjects such as the effects of empire on European economies, societies, cultures and political systems, notably but not exclusively those of Britain; the global economic ties that bound Europe to other parts of the world in a nexus of mutual interaction; and the rise of worldwide empire as a common European process rather than one specific to any particular European nation. Historians have also been busy rewriting the history of individual European nations in a global context, emphasizing the effects of European diasporas – the millions of Europeans who emigrated to other parts of the globe – on the 'mother country', the infusion of European nationalism with elements of racial theory derived from the experience of colonization in Africa or Asia, and the emergence of global geopolitics as a key factor in relations between European states.

A particular influence on my own approach here has been exerted by the German historian Jürgen Osterhammel, whose *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (2009) is indeed a truly global history, not a Eurocentric one such as Hobsbawm's trilogy. Covering the nineteenth century, his chapters deal with an astonishing variety of topics, including memory and self-observation, time, space, mobility, living standards, cities, frontiers, power, revolution, the state, energy, work, communications, hierarchies, knowledge, civilization, religion and many more. Osterhammel deliberately picks out common themes, connections between different parts of the globe, shared developments and global processes. Yet the author's argumentative and reflective presence generally eclipses that of the people who lived in the era about which he is writing. Often, too, historical surveys spend all their time

establishing the broad contours of interpretation without attempting to convey how they could be discerned in the lives and experiences of contemporaries. This is perhaps understandable in a brief textbook, whose ultimate purpose is to prepare students for examinations, but a more extensive work such as the present one, aimed in the first place at the general reader, fortunately has the space to provide the detail that conveys the flavour of the period, in its mixture of strangeness and familiarity, and as far as possible to allow contemporaries to speak for themselves.

Other, no less ambitious works of global history written around the same time as Osterhammel's have offered a rather different approach to the nineteenth century, based on the perception that this was the period above all others when Europe led the world and came to exercise dominion over other parts of the globe. Historians like the late Chris Bayly, in his impressive *The Birth of the Modern World* (2004), and John Darwin, in his masterly survey of global empires, *After Tamerlane* (2007), have established with a wealth of comparative evidence the approximate equality in almost every respect, from living standards to cultural achievements, of a whole range of civilizations across the world in the early eighteenth century. The Mughal Empire in India, the Qing Empire in China, the great pre-colonial empires of Benin and its neighbours in Africa, the Ottoman Empire and other states were roughly on a par with Europe around 1700. By 1815 this was no longer the case; Europe had forged ahead, not, as some historians, notably Niall Ferguson in his sweeping survey of *Civilization* (2011), have maintained, because of its intrinsic superiority, but because of quite specific historical circumstances. Europe maintained and extended its advantage on many fronts right up to the early years of the twentieth century, though by then, as we shall see, that advantage was increasingly coming under attack. The First World War called it into question; the Second World War destroyed it, bringing down the global European empires in its aftermath. This global hegemony is the main justification for taking the years 1815 to 1914 as a distinct and meaningful period of European history. Throughout this book, the global context will be repeatedly emphasized, and events and processes on other continents will be brought into the narrative as a way of helping to explain what was happening in Europe during these decades.

Global history also means *transnational* history. Many histories of Europe have consisted of largely separate narratives of different national histories. Arthur Grant and Harold Temperley's *Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (1927) falls into this category; William Simpson and Martin Jones's *Europe 1783–1914* is in the same mould, with separate chapters on France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the Habsburg Empire. The German

historian Michael Salewski's *History of Europe* (2000) is subtitled *States and Nations from the Ancient World to the Present* and presents a series of histories of its individual countries and the relations between them. This means that the reader largely loses sight of what, if anything, bound Europe together as a whole, what these countries had in common, or what wider processes affected them. The long-established and still incomplete *Oxford History of Modern Europe* takes a similar approach, with every volume devoted to a single country except for the four volumes that cover the relations between them over different periods. And yet, as well as being an evolving assemblage of individual states, Europe, as this book hopes to demonstrate, also had a definable existence as a collective entity. This was not as a geographical area: Europe's eastern boundaries in particular were vague and hard to define, and Europe's social and cultural limits became blurred in the course of mass emigration to other parts of the world. Rather, with these provisos, Europe is best seen as a social, economic, political and cultural region sharing many common characteristics and stretching from Britain and Ireland in the west to Russia and the Balkans in the east.

In taking an approach that as far as possible is transnational, I am consciously following in the footsteps of Lord Acton, the founder of the *Cambridge Modern History* at the end of the nineteenth century. In his plan for this ambitious enterprise, Acton told his contributors that:

> Universal history is not the sum of all particular histories, and ought to be contemplated, first, in its distinctive essence, as Renaissance, Reformation, Religious Wars, Absolute Monarchy, Revolution &c. The several countries may or may not contribute to feed the main stream . . . [but] attention ought not to be dispersed, by putting Portugal, Transylvania, Iceland, side by side with France and Germany . . . My plan is to break through the mere juxtaposition of national histories and to take in, as far as may be, what is extra-territorial and universal.

In the event Acton died before he could realize this ambitious project, and when it was eventually published under the more efficient but less imaginative editorship of Sir Adolphus Ward, the *Cambridge Modern History* did indeed largely adopt a country-by-country approach, reflecting very much the nation-based vision of a younger generation of historians in the changed political and cultural atmosphere of the Europe they inhabited. It was only with the fall of communism, the extension of the European Union to much of Eastern Europe, and the renewed onward march of globalization, that the possibility of writing a real European history re-emerged. It is no longer possible to equate it, however, as Grant and

Temperley and their counterparts elsewhere tried to do, with the history of national politics and international relations. Since the 1970s at the latest, historical investigation has expanded its field of vision until it encompasses almost every aspect of human activity in the past. Already in the early 1960s, Hobsbawm's *Age of Revolution* contained chapters on religion, ideology, science, the arts, the economy and much else besides. Subsequently historical research has extended its range even further, as Osterhammel's list of topics suggests, most recently into the history of landscape and environment. Hobsbawm was able to bind his themes together through an overarching master-narrative that placed the development and determining influence of capitalism at its core. But the historians of the early twenty-first century, a time when grand master-narratives have fallen into disrepute, can no longer enjoy this advantage: the most we can do, as Tim Blanning says, is to trace 'lines of development'.

Two of the main lines of development Blanning identifies for the years 1648 to 1815, what he calls 'the relentless march of the state to hegemony' and 'the emergence of a new kind of cultural space – the public sphere', continued through the nineteenth century. They achieved an expansion and a dominance that were almost unthinkable in the eighteenth century. The state structures of the Restoration Europe that emerged in 1815 would in some respects still have been familiar to the continent's inhabitants of thirty years before, even though appearances in many ways were deceptive. The power and intrusiveness of the state were still relatively limited. Popular participation in politics was still minimal, despite the recent, vivid example of the events of the French Revolution. The public sphere was still confined mostly to a small stratum of the educated and the literate and their institutions, from the periodical publication to the coffee house or the reading club. But by 1914 the state had been transformed. On the one hand there was universal male and in some parts of the continent even female suffrage, and direct popular participation in the shaping of national, regional and local policy, not least through organized political parties. On the other hand there was a vast expansion in the control that the state could exercise over its citizens, in areas ranging from education to health, military service to social work.

The linked processes of the improvement of communications and the growth of the economy delineated by Blanning accelerated faster in the nineteenth century than anyone in the eighteenth century could have imagined. In 1815 the railway, the telegraph, the steamship and the photograph were barely visible over the historical horizon. By 1914 Europe was entering the age of the telephone, the motor car, radio and cinema. In 1815 we are still in the age of the Newtonian understanding of the universe, of

representational art and classical music. By 1914 Einstein had propounded his Theory of Relativity, Picasso had painted his Cubist works, Schoenberg had composed his first atonal pieces. Europe was also in an even more immediate sense entering the age of the machine gun, the tank, the submarine and the fighter plane. The first aerial bombardment of an enemy was recorded in 1911, during the Italian invasion of Libya, and the first European concentration camps were opened in South Africa by the British and in South-West Africa (Namibia) by the Germans. Such developments, foreshadowing the immense violence and destructiveness of the first half of the twentieth century, stand as a warning against treating the nineteenth century as most of its inhabitants treated it, as an age of linear progress and open-ended improvement. Progress had its price, and in the succeeding period, between 1914 and 1949 – as Ian Kershaw shows in *To Hell and Back*, the next volume in this series – Europe paid it in full measure.

Blanning's volume ends on a gloomy note as far as the condition of life of the vast majority of Europeans was concerned, with the beginnings of industry and the effects of rapid population growth bringing 'a new kind of poverty ... not a sudden affliction by famine, plague or war but a permanent state of malnutrition and underemployment'. The nineteenth century, indeed, as this suggests, was relatively free of major European famines, plagues and wars, and one task of this book will be to explain why. As in so many other aspects of this period, the changed relationship of Europe with the rest of the world was an important determining factor here. Famines there were, notably in Ireland, Scandinavia and Russia, and plagues too, in the form of periodic outbreaks of cholera that swept the continent, but these too were neither so frequent nor so devastating as in some previous eras, and by the end of the century they had largely vanished from Europe.

This did not mean, however, that social, economic and other forms of inequality vanished along with them. Running through this book is the representation of the shifting contours of inequality in the nineteenth century, with its older forms, such as serfdom on the land, giving way to newer ones, such as wage labour in the factory. The nineteenth century can be seen as the age par excellence of emancipation, with millions of people being given greater equality of status, including in key respects the majority of the rural population, women, and religious minorities, notably the Jews, and this book will explore in detail these enormous changes and how they came about. But equality and emancipation were only ever partial and conditional, as the years after 1914 were to show, and describing the limitations people experienced in this process of liberation is also a central task for the historian of nineteenth-century Europe.

Arguments and disputes about inequality were at the centre of nineteenth-century European politics. Building on the legacy of ideas bequeathed by the French Revolution, increasing numbers of political thinkers and actors began to conceive and tried to implement ways and means of overcoming the inequalities they witnessed. The spectrum of solutions ranged from aristocratic paternalism and the sense of *noblesse oblige* at one extreme to the anarchist attempt to destroy the state at the other. Socialism, liberalism, communism, nationalism and many other doctrines prioritized one method or another of freeing people from the yoke of oppression and exploitation according to how they defined it. Those who put stability and hierarchy first recognized they could not survive simply by clinging to the old order, or at least, most of them did; and so they too became participants in the great debate on inequality. Religions offered a variety of answers to problems rooted in the temporal world, or advocated escape from it altogether. What all these many different strands of thought had in common was a desire to acquire and wield power so that they could put their ideas into action. Thus while Tim Blanning calls his history of Europe from 1648 to 1815 *The Pursuit of Glory*, signifying the priorities of the dominant political elites of the age, this book has the title *The Pursuit of Power*.

The pursuit of power permeated European society in the nineteenth century. States grasped for world power, governments reached out for imperial power, armies built up their military power, revolutionaries plotted to grab power, political parties campaigned to come to power, bankers and industrialists strove for economic power, serfs and sharecroppers were gradually liberated from the arbitrary power exercised over them by landowning aristocrats. The central social process of the century, the emancipation of vast sections of the oppressed from the power of their oppressors, found its most widespread manifestation in the emancipation of women from their imprisonment in a nexus of laws, customs and conventions that subordinated them to the power of men. Just as feminists fought for equality before the law, so too in the new world of industry, labour unions went on strike for more power over wages and conditions of work, modernist artists challenged the power of the Academies, and novelists organized their work around struggles for power within the family and other social institutions.

Nineteenth-century society increased its power over nature: governments gained the power to avert or alleviate hunger and natural disasters such as fires and floods; medical researchers reached out in their laboratories for power over disease; engineers and planners channelled rivers, drained marshes, drove out wild animals and levelled forests, they built

towns and cities, railway and sewer networks, ships and bridges, to extend humankind's power over the natural world; and in a different sense, scientists and mechanics devised and exploited new sources of power, from steam to electricity, from the power loom to the internal combustion engine. Power could be formal or informal, it could be exercised through violence or persuasion, it could be consensual or majoritarian, it might take economic, social, cultural, political, religious, organizational or a host of other forms. But as the nineteenth century progressed, people increasingly prioritized power over glory, honour and comparable values that had been dominant through most centuries before 1815. By the end of the century, too, power was being reconceptualized in racial terms, as Europeans came to regard their hegemony over much of the rest of the world as evidence of their superiority over its inhabitants. How and why all this came to be, and how power relations within Europe affected and were affected by the rapidly changing power relations between Europe, Asia, Africa and other parts of the globe, are the themes that stand at the centre of this book.

The book is divided into eight chapters, each of which is subdivided into ten sections. Chapters 1, 3, 7 and 8 deal primarily with political history, Chapters 2 and 4 with social and economic history, and Chapters 5 and 6 with what might broadly be called cultural history. The first chapter takes the story of European politics from the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815 to the last aftershocks of the 1830 Revolutions; the third chapter takes the story up to the 1848 Revolutions and follows their aftermath in the conflict-ridden and unstable years up to the early 1870s; the seventh chapter examines how European states responded to the growing challenge of democracy between 1871 and 1914; and the eighth and final chapter turns to Europe's subjugation, however partially realized, of most other parts of the globe in the age of imperialism, and its ultimately devastating effects on Europe itself with the coming of the First World War. In between the first two of these chronologically defined narratives there is a chapter on the development of European economy and society from 1815 to 1848 – though full coverage of the key change of the period, the emancipation of the serfs in many parts of the Continent, demands that some strands of development in the rural world have to be followed all the way up to 1914. The fourth chapter deals with the major structures of Europe's society and economy from mid-century onwards and the massive changes they underwent during these years. Chapter 5 ranges over the whole period in a discussion of society's attempt to impose order and control over nature, from the wild forests, rivers and mountains of the Continent to the struggle for mastery over human nature in its many forms

of expression. The sixth chapter contrasts the century as an age of emotion with the age of reason that preceded it, dealing with the various manifestations of the human spirit, religion, belief, culture, education, and ideas of humanity itself, that shared this fundamental characteristic.

To underscore the human dimension of this history, each chapter begins with the life story of an individual whose beliefs and experiences raise many of the topics the chapter discusses. Each of the eight individuals comes from a different country, and there are four men and four women. This balance is quite deliberate. Women formed over half the population of Europe during this period, as in almost every other period in history. Just as important is another fundamental feature of the period, namely that the overwhelming majority of Europeans, even on the eve of the First World War, lived in and off the countryside. Peasants, farmers and landowners often get pushed to the margins in histories of nineteenth-century Europe, particularly those structured around the rise of industrial society, but to consign these millions to a category labelled by Karl Marx as 'the idiocy of rural life' or to portray them as nothing more than the victims of historical change seems to me to be fundamentally misguided.

The book is designed to be read through from start to finish; those who wish to use it as a work of reference are advised to consult the index. In conformity with the overall format of the series, there are no footnote or endnote references. As in any synthetic work of this nature, the author is reliant principally on the work of others; such originality as it possesses is to be found in the arguments and interpretations that the book advances, and in the range and juxtaposition of the themes it treats. I hope the many other historians whose specialized research and writing I have plundered will forgive me for not crediting their work explicitly. At least, however, I may be permitted to reference the sources for the biographies that open each chapter (full details in the Further Reading on pp. 717–26): *The Diary of a Napoleonic Foot Soldier*, ed. Marc Raeff (New York, 1991), for pp. 1–3; *A Life under Russian Serfdom*, transl. and ed. Boris B. Gorshkov (Budapest, 2005), for pp. 85–8; Máire Cross and Tim Gray, *The Feminism of Flora Tristan* (Oxford, 1992) and *The London Journal of Flora Tristan*, transl. and ed. Jean Hawkes (London, 1992), for pp. 169–71; Hermynia zur Mühlen, *The End and the Beginning*, transl. and ed. Lionel Gossman (Cambridge, 2010), for pp. 274–7; Wendy Bracewell, *Orientations* (Budapest, 2009), for pp. 355–8, also for pp. 143 and 489; Brita K. Stendhal, *The Education of a Self-Made Woman* (Lewiston, NY, 1994), for pp. 444–7; Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts* (London, 2001), for pp. 537–40; and Ivor N. Hume, *Belzoni* (Charlottesville, VA), for pp. 626–9. Other lengthy quotations are taken from original sources, except

for pp. 426 (Dirk Blasius, *Der verwaltete Wahnsinn* [Frankfurt, 1980]); 429–31 (Andrew Scull, *The Most Solitary of Afflictions* [London, 1993]); 437 (John A. Davis, *Conflict and Control* [London, 1988]); 576–7 (F. S. L. Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell* [London, 1977]); 605 (Hartmut Pogge-von Strandmann, 'Domestic Origins of Germany's Colonial Expansion under Bismarck', *Past and Present*, February 1969); 612 (Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution* [London, 1960]); 614 (Edvard Radzinsky, *Alexander II* [New York, 2005]); and 663 (Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* [New York, 1998]).

I began writing this book in 2009, but its origins go back much further, to the decades I spent teaching the history of nineteenth-century Europe at a number of universities before my interests shifted to the twentieth century with my move to Cambridge in 1998. I have been fortunate to be able to draw on the many lectures I have given on the history of nineteenth-century Europe over the years, at the University of Stirling in Scotland, at Columbia University in the City of New York, at the University of East Anglia at Norwich, at Birkbeck, University of London, and most recently at Gresham College in the City of London. I am grateful to the students who listened patiently to my ideas in lectures and seminars in all these institutions and helped firm up, or change, my arguments and my general approach with their comments. A project as wide-ranging as this one could not have been completed in so short a time without research assistance, and I am especially grateful to my former students Daniel Cowling, Niamh Gallagher, Rachel Hoffman, Susie Lada and Georgie Williams for supplying me with material. Cambridge University's History Faculty and Wolfson College provided invaluable time to write by granting me sabbatical leave in 2012, and the University Library's inexhaustible resources and helpful staff made it the first port of call for information on many subjects.

Many friends and colleagues have read all or part of this book, suggested improvements and corrected my errors. Simon Winder at Penguin Books, a prince among editors, has suggested many improvements. I owe a huge debt to Rachel Hoffman for her careful and detailed reading of Chapters 1, 3 and 6, to David Motadel for the many corrections he made to Chapters 2, 4–5, 7–8, to Joanna Bourke for commenting incisively on Chapter 5, and to Tim Blanning, Lucy Riall and Astrid Swenson for their very helpful reading of the entire manuscript. Any remaining mistakes are entirely my own responsibility. Cecilia Mackay provided invaluable help with the illustrations, which have been chosen to offer additional insights on the topics discussed, and selected to follow the sequence of the chapters. The paintings and photographs referred to in the text can easily be located

on the Internet, if so desired. Andras Bereznay, as ever, proved a learned and stimulating cartographer. Richard Mason has been a meticulous copy-editor; he corrected many errors and helped materially improve the readability of the text at a number of points. Christine Shuttleworth produced a splendidly comprehensive index. Richard Duguid has put me in his debt by overseeing the process of production. Several knotty problems of orthography had in the end to remain unresolved, most notably the transliteration of Russian names: we opted for the traditional forms, since the modern Library of Congress system is still unfamiliar to the majority of readers. As far as possible, people's original names are used – thus for example Wilhelm rather than William, or Franz rather than Francis – but in a few exceptional cases, notably those of the Russian tsars, this would seem strange, so the English forms have been preferred. In the case of place names, the most widely used contemporary appellations have been used, with their modern equivalents provided in the Index.

Finally I am, as always, deeply indebted to Christine Corton for taking time off from her own work to check the proofs, and, with our sons Matthew and Nicholas, for sustaining me throughout the long process of gestation.

Richard J. Evans
Cambridge, May 2016

I

The Legacies of Revolution

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

At some time in the late 1820s or early 1830s – the date is uncertain – in the town of Ellwangen in the south-west German state of Württemberg, the stonemason Jakob Walter (1788–1864) sat down to write his memoirs. He had been conscripted into the Grand Army of French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) as a common foot soldier and marched with it all the way to Moscow and back. In stark, simple prose, Walter recorded the terrible sufferings he had experienced during the army's retreat in the last months of 1812. Constantly harassed by Cossacks, scavenging for food, cold, dirty and hungry, robbed by bandits, and narrowly escaping death on numerous occasions, Walter somehow survived the ordeal. On finding regular quarters, for the first time in many weeks, in a Polish town, he gave himself a wash:

> The washing of my hands and face proceeded very slowly because the crusts on my hands, ears, and nose had grown like fir-bark, with cracks and coal-black scales. My face resembled that of a heavily bearded Russian peasant; and, when I looked into the mirror, I was astonished myself at the strange appearance of my face. I washed, then, for an hour with hot water and soap.

All attempts to rid himself and his clothing of lice ('my "sovereigns"') proved futile, however. Tramping further westwards with his unit, he began to suffer from a fever, most probably typhus, and had to be carried on a cart the rest of the way. Some 100 out of the 175 men in his convoy of wagons did not survive the journey. When, still lice-ridden, Walter reached his homeland, he did not think his relatives would recognize him: 'I made my entrance with a sooty Russian coat, an old round hat, and, under and in my clothing, countless travelling companions, among which were Russians, Poles, Prussians, and Saxons.' Finally he was able to wash

properly, dispose of his lice-infested clothes, and begin the slow recovery of his health. Local people started to greet him 'as a "Russian" – as everyone who had been there was called at the time'.

Like the vast majority of ordinary Europeans of the era, Walter had little or no interest in, or indeed knowledge of, politics. He had been conscripted by the authorities in the French puppet state of Württemberg in 1806, and recalled to arms in 1809 and 1812. He had no more choice about this than did the many hundreds of thousands of other conscript soldiers of the time. His diary shows no sense of commitment to the French or indeed the Württemberg cause, no interest in the outcome of the war, no hatred of the Russians or desire to kill them. As an ordinary foot soldier he showed little awareness of the strategic issues behind the campaigns in which he took part. All Walter was really interested in was surviving the ordeal to which he had been unwillingly subjected. The elan of the French troops who had surged victoriously towards the counter-revolutionary Austrian armies in the early 1790s singing the *Marseillaise* had long since disappeared. Only a small number of Napoleon's soldiers, such as the elite Imperial Guard, were still motivated and committed to his cause by this time. The war-weariness that makes itself felt throughout Walter's diaries was experienced more generally across Europe, and for good reason: almost a quarter of a century of more or less continuous war had left everyone numb with suffering and despair. If Jakob Walter had any kind of commitment, it was to the strong Catholic faith that sustained him during his experience, but this did not prevent him from portraying in graphic detail the increasingly dehumanizing effects of the conflict on its participants.

After his return to his homeland, Jakob Walter settled down once more to an unremarkable life as a stonemason. He married in 1817 and the couple had ten children. Five of them survived to 1856, when Jakob, now a relatively prosperous building contractor and overseer, wrote a letter with news about the family to his son, who had emigrated to America and was living in Kansas. The following year the young man travelled back to Germany to visit his parents, and married a local girl, the daughter of the mayor of a village near Ellwangen. According to family tradition, he took the manuscript memoirs of his father back with him on his return to Kansas in 1858. Here the memoirs remained in the family's possession until they were made available to scholarship in the early 1930s. Jakob Walter himself lived on in Ellwangen for another few years, dying in 1864; his wife survived him and died in 1873. Almost everything about him remains hidden from us, like the lives of countless other villagers in the nineteenth century: only his experiences in the Grand Army's fateful

expedition to Moscow, the fact that, unlike most of those who took part in it, Walter survived the ordeal, and the chance circumstances, whatever they were, that led him to put down these experiences in writing, raise him above the common obscurity in which the vast majority of Europeans led their lives.

On the way back from Moscow, Jakob Walter had at one point caught a glimpse of Napoleon himself, sitting down for an al fresco meal near the Berezina river. He was not impressed:

> He watched his army pass by in the most wretched condition. What he may have felt in his heart is impossible to surmise. His outward appearance seemed indifferent and unconcerned over the wretchedness of his soldiers; only ambition and lost honour may have made themselves felt in his heart; and, although the French and Allies shouted into his ears many oaths and curses about his own guilty person, he was still able to listen to them unmoved.

By this stage of the disastrous retreat from Moscow, the majority of Napoleon's surviving troops had nothing but hatred and contempt for him. Ripped from their domestic lives by the insatiable engine of the French Empire's military recruiting machine, 685,000 troops from Germany, Poland, Italy and France – the last named supplying fewer than half the total – had marched on Russia; fewer than 70,000 had returned, leaving 400,000 dead and more than 100,000 prisoners of the Russians, with an unknown number of stragglers and deserters making their way back unrecorded. Further battles, in which Napoleon was driven back relentlessly westwards by a coalition of European armies led by the British, the Prussians, the Austrians and the Russians, had caused further carnage. Finally, in 1814, the Allies had occupied Paris, forcing Napoleon into exile on the Mediterranean Isle of Elba.

It used to be thought that the damage inflicted by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was relatively light compared to the devastation wrought by later conflicts. Yet altogether, in twenty-three years of more or less continuous warfare that had swept back and forth across Europe in the wake of the French Revolution, an estimated five million people had died; compared to Europe's population as a whole, this was proportionately as many as, if not more than, those who died during the First World War. One in five Frenchmen born between 1790 and 1795 had perished during the conflicts. Napoleon's armies had lost anything up to one and a half million men in all. Moscow had been burned to the ground by the Russians to deny its resources to the enemy for overwintering. For three days, one observer had noted, 'the whole city

was on fire, thick sheaves of flame of various colours rose up on all sides to the heavens, blotting out the horizon, sending in all directions a blinding light and a burning heat'. In the chaos, French soldiers had looted everything they could lay their hands on, joined in the pillaging by peasants who descended upon the city from the surrounding countryside. After the fires had died down, the charred ruins of the burnt-out city had offered little in the way of food and shelter to sustain Napoleon's army through the winter. Nearly 7,000 out of just over 9,000 houses, more than 8,000 shops and warehouses, and over a third of the city's 329 churches had been totally destroyed. Some 270 million roubles' worth of private property had been lost without any possibility of compensation. Many civilians had already fled, and most of the rest had subsequently left the city, facing a life of vagabondage and destitution. Only 2 per cent of the population had remained, and a large proportion of these, including many soldiers, did not survive. When the Russians had eventually reoccupied Moscow, they had been forced to pile up 12,000 corpses on huge pyres and burn them. The reconstruction of the city only began properly in 1814, with parks and gardens springing up where once there had been a jumble of narrow streets, and a grand new palace for the tsar. For more than a generation Moscow remained a building site; the commission established to oversee the city's reconstruction was only wound up in 1842, and even then, Moscow still had far to go before it could regain its former splendour.

In Spain meanwhile, pitched battles and sieges had devastated numerous towns and villages. Puerto Real, occupied by the French during a two-year siege of Cádiz between 1810 and 1812, had lost half its population of 6,000; 40 per cent of its buildings had been destroyed, along with three-quarters of its olive trees and most of the surrounding pine forests. Many towns in Spain never recovered. Everywhere, the depredations of the French had caused a precipitous drop in the numbers of cattle, horses, pigs and sheep. Extremadura had lost nearly 15 per cent of its pre-war population. Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) captured the realities of the conflict in eighty-two engravings known by the title *The Disasters of War*. Unpublished until the 1860s, they showed horrific scenes of rape, pillage, mutilation and butchery. In one of the engravings, a corpse is depicted rising from a coffin holding a sheet of paper inscribed with the word *Nada*, 'Nothing', the word that the painter chose to summarize the end result of the bitter years of conflict.

In the Rhineland, the repeated rampages of French troops over the years had stripped the fields of their produce, the farms of their livestock, and the towns and villages of their supplies. Ferocious financial levies imposed by the French on the inhabitants of the region had added to the general picture of rapacity and greed. The damage had been done early on in the conflict, with lasting effect. Returning from the area in 1792, a French agent had reported that 'not even the most vital means of subsistence – nothing for the animals or the seed – have been left behind, and other objects in the villages have also been stolen'. Bands of robbers had roamed the countryside, dressed as French soldiers to deceive their victims, signalling by so doing that local inhabitants were habituated to the rape, pillage and destruction being carried out by the occupying military. Indeed, when the French armies had arrived at Aachen, they had immediately denuded the town and the surrounding countryside of grain, forage, clothing, livestock, and almost anything that could be moved; hundreds of local inhabitants had died of starvation as winter began to bite.

Not only the French but other armies too had lived off the land, looting and plundering as they went. All of them had made heroic efforts to organize essential supplies, and in the period 1812–14 at least, growing patriotic sentiment among the Allied nations had ensured that nobles, merchants and ordinary farmers had made extensive voluntary contributions of many kinds to the war effort. But this had seldom been enough, given the enormous scale of the fighting. The Russian army had organized basic supplies of food for itself, transported across long communication lines that had become stretched almost to breaking point as it marched westwards in 1813–14. However, these supplies had consisted of little more than black bread and the basic ingredients of gruel or porridge, and the troops had been forced to find more varied and palatable things to eat by stealing them, sometimes from their own allies. Feeding the hundreds of thousands of horses that carried cavalrymen, pulled field artillery or dragged supply wagons had posed a particular problem for all the armies involved in the war, and foraging parties had ranged far and wide in search of oats and other fodder. As the Russians had moved into France, whole villages had been devastated by the fighting. Peasants had fled to the forests, as they were already used to doing to evade Napoleon's conscription agents, emerging every now and then to waylay Allied supply trains along the roads. After the Battle of Waterloo, some 900,000 foreign troops occupied France, causing widespread economic hardship by their exactions.

Nature did not help the process of recovery. In April 1815 a massive eruption of the Tambora volcano, the largest known in history, on the island of Sumbawa in present-day Indonesia, sent a vast dust cloud up to twenty-seven miles high. The noise of the explosion was heard 1,250 miles away. Huge masses of sulphur were ejected into the stratosphere, where the minute particles lingered for more than two years, darkening the skies

and creating spectacular orange sunsets. 'Morn came and went,' wrote George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824), '– and came, and brought no day.' In Hungary brown-coloured snow fell in January 1816, and whole houses were said to have disappeared beneath snowdrifts. The eruption occurred in the middle of a decade of cold summers that had already begun in 1811, caused by changes in the sun's output and the circulation of weather systems around the earth, and by an earlier major volcanic eruption that had taken place in Colombia in 1808. By the end of 1816 it was clear that crop yields had declined in many areas to little more than a quarter of their normal levels, and the harvest, such as it was, came in over a month later than usual. In the Netherlands violent summer storms inflicted further damage on crops. 'Melancholy accounts have been received from all parts of the Continent of the unusual wetness of the season,' reported a British newspaper in July 1816: 'In several provinces of Holland, the rich grass lands are all under water, and scarcity and high prices are naturally apprehended and dreaded. In France the interior of the country has suffered greatly from the floods and heavy rains.' The Paris Observatory recorded summer temperatures that would turn out to be 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit below the mean for the period 1740–1870, and in some areas the grapes failed to ripen before winter set in.

'Every storm of the past summer', stated a yearbook compiled in Württemberg in 1817, 'was followed by the most severe cold, so that it regularly felt like November.' The Lower Rhine flooded for five whole months, and in Lombardy-Venetia snow was still lying on the ground in May. Early frost during the autumn did further damage. Carinthian farmers were unable to sow winter grains for the third year in succession, and 1817's grain yield in the south-west German state of Baden was said to be the poorest within living memory. In south-eastern Europe the harsh winter of 1815–16 killed more than 24,000 sheep in the county of Bács, in the Vojvodina, it was reported, while continuous rains in the early spring led to 'extensive flood, mostly because of the Danube', as the chroniclers of the Franciscan monastery of Šarengrad recorded. 'Nobody, not even old men remember such a flood happening before. It flooded many villages on this and on that side of the Danube, arable land and hayfields . . . The water rose as high as man's height.' The parish priest in the Croatian village of Zminj called 1816 a year that was 'fatal':

> because of frequent rain and other bad weather [it] was so sterile that many citizens could not prepare enough cereals to last them for half a year, and some not even for two months . . . As early as the month of March, these people began to be affected by Black Famine; yet they supported each other as long as they had anything to eat . . . But this was of short duration . . . Reduced to the uttermost misery they were walking around and falling dead, some at home, some along roads, some in the forests etc.

For Croatia, 1816 and above all 1817 was the time of the 'great famine'. Grain prices were between two and three times higher than they were five years later. War had disrupted communications, so relief was hard to organize. This global climatic calamity thus resulted in the worst harvests to be seen in Europe for more than a century; and it happened when Europe was struggling to recover its trade and industry after the disruptions of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The British blockade and the Napoleonic counter-blockade known as the Continental System had ruined commerce on the Continent and in the United Kingdom too, cutting off markets and throwing thousands out of work. By the end of 1816 there were said to be between 20,000 and 30,000 unemployed weavers in the London district of Spitalfields, and similar conditions were observed in textile towns in Saxony, Switzerland and the Low Countries. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers like Jakob Walter were demobilized at the end of the war, adding to the already numerous armies of the unemployed.

At the same time as people were suffering a severe loss of income, the catastrophically bad harvest of 1816 caused grain prices to rise precipitously. Bread was the staple of most people's diet, and in Paris it cost more than twice as much in 1817 as it had done a year before. Touring the Rhineland in 1817, the Prussian army officer and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) noted 'a complete harvest failure in all of southern and western Germany', which was resulting in 'a true famine'. Clausewitz 'saw ruined figures, scarcely resembling men, prowling around the fields searching for food among the unharvested and already half-rotten potatoes that never grew to maturity'. In the uplands of Habsburg-ruled Lombardy, the poor were living off roots and herbs. In Transylvania and the eastern provinces of Hungary, deaths from starvation were estimated at more than 20,000. The Habsburg Emperor Franz I (1768–1835) complained that in one part of Lombardy 'the distress had become so severe that the population was reduced to a diet of lettuce and soup made from herbs, and on very many days had nothing to eat at all'.

In these dire circumstances, the poorest were reduced to begging, stealing, or fleeing to the towns in search of food. In Munich, wrote one observer towards the end of 1816, 'beggars appeared from all directions, as if they had crawled out of the ground'. Hungary was said to be 'overrun with bands of beggars', while in Rome and Vienna the police began to

conduct regular raids to take them off the streets and put them into public works projects. 'The number of beggars,' wrote one visitor to the Swiss canton of Appenzell in June 1816, 'mostly women and children, is perfectly shocking.' They had, as another observer noted, 'the paleness of death in their cheeks'. Many of the poor took the drastic decision to leave Europe altogether, assisted by local authorities who were only too glad to get rid of them: more than 2,000 people left Baden for Rio de Janeiro in 1818; 20,000 German and 30,000 French people were said to have left for the United States in 1817; more than 9,000 impoverished inhabitants of Württemberg made the long trek eastwards to the Russian Empire in 1817, in response to promises of support from Tsar Alexander I (1777–1825). The movement of masses of human beings across large areas of territory brought with it epidemic disease, especially in the unhygienic conditions in which armies and bands of destitute migrants and beggars subsisted during an age before hygienic precautions or antibiotic remedies. Deaths from smallpox nearly quadrupled in Paris between 1816 and 1818, with a major epidemic breaking out in the Low Countries as well. Malnutrition weakened people's resistance and made them susceptible to diarrhoea, dysentery and oedema; in the northern Italian town of Brescia, the hospitals admitted nearly 300 cases of scurvy in the first half of 1816 alone. Typhus, carried by the human body louse, spread with particular rapidity, affecting almost every town in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland – in 1818 alone some 32,000 cases and 3,500 deaths from the disease were recorded in Glasgow, a city of 130,000 inhabitants. Famine relief measures only helped the disease to spread more quickly. A physician in Ireland considered, accurately enough, 'the contagion to have been rapidly spread by the numbers wandering about in search of subsistence, and also by the establishments for the distribution of soup and other provisions among the poor where multitudes were gathered together'.

Bubonic plague spread rapidly across the Balkans, reaching Italy in 1815, killing one-seventh of the population of the Italian town of Noja, near Bari on the Adriatic; when it reached the Balearic islands it devastated the population, causing a total of 12,000 deaths in 1820. Large numbers of people died of the plague in Bosnia, perhaps a third or more of the townsfolk and a quarter of the peasantry. Driven desperate by hunger, people flocked from the countryside to infected towns in search of food, evading quarantines and cordons sanitaires. The population of the Dalmatian city of Makarska fell from 1,575 to 1,025 as a result of the epidemic, while the village of Tucepi lost 363 of its 806 inhabitants. The Ottoman administration, which still ruled over the greater part of the Balkans, was incapable of dealing with these calamities. This was the last major

outbreak of the plague in Europe, and it was a severe one. One historical study of the epidemic has concluded that 'the sanitary and demographic catastrophe which befell Bosnia in the years 1815–18 had no parallel in other European countries since the Black Death in the years 1347–1351'. In the western Mediterranean, seaports hastily improvised quarantine arrangements for incoming ships, while the province known as the Military Frontier of the Habsburg Monarchy, the heavily garrisoned border with the Ottoman Empire, posed another barrier to communication. These institutions mostly proved effective, stopping the plague from spreading to the north and west. Nevertheless, the combined effect of all these factors, particularly harvest failure and epidemic disease, was to increase the number of deaths across Europe. In most of western Europe death rates rose by 8 or 9 per cent, but some areas were particularly badly affected; for example, mortality rates doubled in eastern Switzerland over the same period.

Beginning in 1816, Europe experienced the most widespread and violent series of grain riots since the French Revolution. Starving crowds in East Anglia wielding cudgels studded with iron spikes and carrying a banner inscribed with the words 'Bread or Blood' trashed the houses of suspected profiteers, demanding a lowering of the price of bread and meat. In northern England and Scotland, crowds seized grain stores and attacked the homes of millers, tradesmen and corn merchants. In many parts of France, groups of people prevented the movement of grain outside their own area, while in Italy granaries and bakeries were looted, and there were grain riots in Augsburg and Munich. As cereal prices reached unprecedented levels in the Low Countries in June 1817, mobs attacked and looted bakeries, and used the second anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo to protest against the price of bread. Crowds raided farms in eastern France and were so numerous that some people were reminded of the mass peasant mobilization known as the Great Fear in 1789. In many cases these disturbances took on a distinctively political tone, most notably in a mass uprising at Lyon in 1817, sparked by rumours of Napoleon's impending return. In Manchester, on 10 March 1817, several hundred weavers (the 'Blanketeers') resolved to march on London to demand measures to relieve the crisis in the cotton industry. In June politics played some part in the abortive uprising in Nottingham known as the Pentrich Revolution, and in the Breslau insurrection of 23 August when conscripts refused to take the Prussian militia oath. Looking at these disturbances on a Europe-wide basis makes it clear that they were fundamentally caused not by local or national political factors but by the subsistence crisis, by mass unemployment and destitution, and in many cases by fear of worse

to come. Of the 2,280 prosecutions undertaken in France during the so-called 'White Terror' of the post-Napoleonic years in France, the vast majority concerned offences such as enforcing lower grain prices, preventing shipments of grain, resisting tax collectors, or cutting down trees in privately owned forests. Counter-revolutionary politics played only a marginal role.

Even as the crisis began to subside, in 1819, rioting continued. A mass public protest meeting in August of up to 60,000 people at St Peter's Fields in Manchester was shot down by the military in an action popularly dubbed 'the Peterloo Massacre', an ironic reference to the Battle of Waterloo; fifteen protesters were killed. In the same year antisemitic riots spread across western and central Europe under the name of the 'Hep-Hep' movement, ascribed by nervous authorities to the machinations of secret societies. In all likelihood they emerged from popular resentment against the perceived commercial success of Jewish businessmen at a time of economic distress. Enraged artisans, encouraged in university towns by radical students, physically attacked Jews, destroyed their property, and forced many to flee. The riots spread from Würzburg to Karlsruhe and Heidelberg, down the Rhine to Frankfurt, north as far as Copenhagen and nearby communities, where sailors joined with local citizens to throw stones at Jewish houses, east to Cracow, Danzig, Prague and Riga, and west into the French departments of the Upper and Lower Rhine and the Moselle. Since property was being attacked, the authorities moved in everywhere to suppress the disturbances, and by 1820 the wave of unrest was over. Here too, the participation in some towns of better-off citizens and university students gave the riots a political element that was profoundly alarming to governments.

The post-Napoleonic crisis and the accompanying Europe-wide unrest, unevenly distributed though they both were in their incidence and impact, impelled governments to adopt welfare and relief measures, creating a general acceptance of the state's obligation to take steps to alleviate the distress of the most impoverished sectors of the population. In 1815–19 the ability of European states to implement this idea was often very limited. The frequent border changes of the previous decades, the fact that newly created states were still putting together their administrative machines and extending them to far-flung areas, and the difficulties of getting grain to the afflicted parts of the country – in an era when roads were often still rudimentary, railways yet to exist, canals few in number and rivers difficult to navigate – all meant that people in more remote regions were doomed to starve unless they migrated closer to the centres of power. But the disturbances also added to the general fear among elites that unrest could lead to revolution as it had done in 1789, with all the consequences that followed. As a result, the post-Napoleonic settlement paid as much attention to preventing revolution, and repressing it where it seemed to be taking place, as it did to curbing whatever the military and political ambitions of France might threaten to be in the future.

AFTER NAPOLEON

Before the victorious European powers could get very far in drawing a line under the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic past, they were confronted by the sudden return of Napoleon from his enforced exile on the Mediterranean island of Elba. The restored French monarchy under Louis XVIII (1755–1824), brother of the executed Louis XVI (1754–93), had run into trouble almost immediately, overwhelmed by the need to pay for the legacy of the war. It retained the unpopular taxes imposed by Napoleon, imposed cutbacks in expenditure on the army, and reimposed censorship after decades of impassioned debate. The proclamation of a militant Catholicism as the state religion alienated many educated Frenchmen. There were widespread fears that the king would try to restore lands confiscated by the Revolution to their original clerical and aristocratic owners. Napoleon's return thus triggered an outburst of popular sentiment in favour of preserving the legacy of the Revolution. 'The people of the countryside,' reported a local official in central France, 'are manifesting an extraordinary sense of enthusiasm [for Napoleon]; fires are lit every evening on elevated positions, and there are public celebrations in many communes.' And, he concluded, 'It is commonly asserted that if the emperor had not returned to put the aristocrats in their place they would have been massacred by the peasants.'

Such outbursts, compounded by demonstrations of support from Parisian workers, alienated many bourgeois notables, and the former emperor faced serious hostility among the clergy. In areas such as the Vendée, the Midi and Brittany, traditionally favourable to the royalists, he was unable to win much support. It was above all among his former soldiers, angered by the mass dismissals and economic measures imposed by the restored monarchy, that Napoleon was popular. 'I only have the people and the Army up to captain level for me,' he remarked: 'The rest are scared of me but I cannot rely on them.' His arrival exposed the deep divisions in French society left by a quarter of a century of revolutionary change. However, within weeks of landing in France on 1 March 1815, he was able to muster 100,000 men, as the provincial administrators, mostly appointed by him,

did their job of recruitment as before, and veterans rallied to the imperial flag. Breaking off their peace negotiations, the Allies acted swiftly, fearing that if he remained in power the ex-emperor would quickly resume his career of conquest and the pursuit of glory. Within a few weeks they too managed to raise a formidable military force, consisting of 112,000 British, Dutch and German troops under Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769–1852). They held back Napoleon's army at the village of Waterloo on 18 June 1815 until 116,000 Prussians under the veteran General Leberecht von Blücher (1742–1819), whom Napoleon wrongly thought he had disposed of at the Battle of Ligny two days before, arrived at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Blücher rescued the British and joined with them in a final assault that drove the French from the battlefield and Napoleon into another enforced exile, this time safely on the remote Atlantic island of St Helena, where he died on 5 May 1821.

Napoleon left behind a political legend that quickly developed into a potent myth among liberal writers, politicians, army officers and students, who were encouraged by his own turn (whether genuine or not) to liberal ideas during the 'Hundred Days' before Waterloo in an attempt to broaden his support. Very much aware of the weakness of his situation, Napoleon had gone to some lengths to reassure the world that his dreams of conquest were over, and the French that he would respect the rights and liberties of the citizen and no longer behave like an imperial dictator. He continued in the same vein in his writings in exile before his death. In subsequent decades the legend of the 'liberal Emperor' gained still further in potency. 'During his life,' remarked the writer François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848), 'the world slipped from his grasp, but in death he possesses it.' In France, 'Bonapartism' came to stand for patriotism, universal manhood suffrage, the sovereignty of the nation, the institutions of an efficient, centralized, bureaucratic administration that dealt equally with all citizens, the periodic consultation of the people by its government through plebiscites and referendums, and an implicit contract between Frenchmen and the state that provided social order and political stability, national pride, and military glory. Not so far removed from Republicanism, Bonapartism differed from it by its greater emphasis on strong leadership and military prowess. But like Republicanism, it struck deep roots in significant parts of the French population.

Former soldiers of Napoleon's armies propagated their ideas among them for some decades following his final defeat in 1815, after they had resumed their peacetime lives in town or country. Most potent of all was the political inspiration of Napoleon's military coup d'état on 18 Brumaire (9 November) 1799, which had overthrown the revolutionary Directory,

brought him to power as First Consul, and led to his establishment of the First French Empire in 1804. Particularly during the 1820s, radical officers all across Europe considered that this was the quickest and most effective way to destroy the repressive regimes of the Restoration and bring about a liberal transformation of the political system wherever they were. Meanwhile, the image of Napoleon was celebrated in countless popular stories and cheap pamphlets, folk songs, paintings and sculptures, old imperial coins, tobacco boxes and trinkets, scarves and caps, even in children's sweets, with chocolates or boiled sugar confections made in the shape of the emperor or cheap bonbons with wrappings displaying Napoleonic symbols. Men cultivated extravagant moustaches to advertise their admiration for the Grand Army's magnificently bewhiskered Old Guard, and wore violets or red carnations in their buttonholes in defiance of the ban imposed on these imperial colours by the restored French monarchy. For many people outside France, too, the cult of Napoleon stood for the achievements of the Revolution, translated into purposeful reform after the excesses of the Terror in the early 1790s. Irish republicans and Polish nationalists looked to Napoleon for inspiration in their political struggles. The Venezuelan liberator of large swathes of South America from Spanish rule, Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), admired Napoleon so much that he had made the journey to Milan to see his hero crowned King of Italy. In China and Madagascar, Napoleon was worshipped by some as a god.

Retrospectively, in France itself, even the Battle of Waterloo became a kind of victory for the French, a celebration of courage in the face of overwhelming odds, of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the 'Great Nation' – 'The Old Guard dies,' General Pierre Cambronne (1770–1842) was supposed to have said at Waterloo, 'it never surrenders.' No matter that the quotation was most probably a later invention, and that Cambronne eventually surrendered anyway: his defiance exerted a powerful fascination for later generations. In *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839) by Stendhal (the pen name of Marie-Henri Beyle, 1783–1842), the novel's hero, Fabrice del Dongo, joins up with Napoleon out of pure idealism, while in the same author's *The Red and the Black* (1830) the post-Napoleonic France portrayed is one of hypocrisy, snobbery and complacency. Another French novelist, Victor Hugo (1802–85), devoted more than forty pages of his novel *Les Misérables* (1862) to refighting the Battle of Waterloo, speculating at many points on how easily it might have gone the other way. Napoleon's plan of battle had been 'masterly', but it had been frustrated by rain ('a few drops of water') that delayed the initial movement of his artillery, by the lie of the land, by luck, and by Wellington's textbook tactics ('Wellington was the technician of war, Napoleon was its

Michelangelo . . . genius was vanquished by rule-of-thumb . . . Waterloo was a battle of the first importance won by a commander of the second rank'). Had Napoleon won, things would have been very different. 'Waterloo was not a battle but a change in the direction of the world.'

In reality, the ultimate defeat of Napoleon had never been in doubt; even if Wellington, as seemed not unlikely at more than one point, had been driven from the battlefield before Blücher and his Prussians arrived, Napoleon would have been vanquished in the end by sheer weight of Allied numbers. A large army led by the Austrians was encamped on the eastern bank of the Rhine further south, and a huge Russian force was marching westward, having already reached Germany by the time of Waterloo. Napoleon was simply unable to raise enough troops to match either of these forces, let alone both. Nevertheless, the spectre, raised by Napoleon's return, of a renewal of the upheavals of the past quarter of a century, had been alarming in the extreme. It had prompted the sovereigns of Britain, Austria, Prussia, Russia and numerous other, smaller European states to undertake a concerted intervention in the affairs of another, sovereign country. This had happened before, in the early 1790s, but then there was at least the excuse that the revolutionaries in France were threatening the lives of the king and his wife Marie-Antoinette, sister of the Austrian Emperor. Beyond that, they had threatened to spread the democratic principles of the Revolution to other parts of Europe. What was striking about the intervention of 1815 was its wholly preventive nature. It set the scene for further actions of this kind in the following years. Wherever the threat of revolution seemed imminent, the great powers of Europe were now clearly prepared to join forces to quash it before it became a reality.

Putting the genie of revolutionary change back into the bottle of history was not easy. For the destructiveness of the wars fought by Napoleon and his predecessors since the early 1790s was not merely physical. Napoleon had redrawn the map of Europe several times, annexing large swathes of it to France, from the Hanseatic cities in the north through the Low Countries to north-west Italy in the south, creating a French Empire that at its height covered 290,000 square miles and counted 44 million people as its inhabitants. He had surrounded this with a ring of satellite states, often ruled by his relatives, including the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Westphalia. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, created by Charlemagne in 800, had come to an inglorious end in 1806. Many of these changes would have been reversed in 1815, but Napoleon had shown that borders were not immutable. There were other changes too. The power of the Church had been reduced, with vast swathes of land secularized and ecclesiastical states swept off the map. The registration of births, marriages and deaths had been assigned to secular authorities. Monasteries had been dissolved, and the power of the Church had been further reduced in many areas by the introduction of freedom of religion, civil marriage and divorce, secular education and the state appointment of clergy. The Church had also been pressured into introducing freedom of worship and a measure of equal rights for non-Christians, notably Jews.

Everywhere that Napoleon ruled he had replaced encrusted custom and privilege with rationality and uniformity. While the emperor's armies rampaged across Europe, his bureaucrats had moved in silently behind, reorganizing, systematizing, standardizing. In the areas that France annexed and the borderlands where it established its client states, notably western Germany, northern Italy and the Low Countries, a new generation of professional administrators had emerged to run things while Napoleon was away waging his never-ending military campaigns. Local and regional jurisdictions, such as those exercised by hundreds of imperial knights in the Holy Roman Empire, and by Church and seigneurial courts, had been supplanted by a system of centralized uniformity administered by a judicial bureaucracy. In all these areas, the Napoleonic Law Code had disposed of existing, often tradition-bound laws and ordinances, introducing a key element of equality before the law, even if in some respects this central principle of the French Revolution had been modified by Napoleon's more conservative outlook on issues such as the rights and duties of women. Property rights were guaranteed wherever the Code applied, as they had not been in many areas before. The Code adhered to many of the key ideas of the French Revolution, including the freedom of the individual, and, as Napoleon himself proclaimed in his testament, equality of opportunity, 'career open to talent', and 'the rule of reason'. Weights and measures had been at least to some extent standardized, internal customs tolls abolished, guilds and other restrictions on the free movement of labour swept away, serfs freed (including in Poland). Everywhere Napoleon had brought change, and as he departed for his final exile on St Helena in 1815, it was clear that much of it could not be reversed.

Napoleon's legacy was even more far-reaching than this. The wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century had been not merely European but global in scale. They had shattered existing global empires and paved the way for a new relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. British rule in much of North America had already been destroyed in the American War of Independence. In their turn, however, the British had broken what remained of French power in Canada and India, and had taken over Dutch and Spanish colonies in the Caribbean

as well as annexing Mauritius, the Cape of Good Hope, Singapore and Ceylon. Republican movements, inspired by the French Revolution and backed by the British, sprang up all over Latin America. Their leading figure, Simón Bolívar, raised a series of irregular armies from the mixed-race and Native American population to defeat the royalists and establish a set of independent states corresponding to the old Spanish provinces – Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru – while similar events further south had led to the creation of Chile and Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay as independent or autonomous states. Between 1811 and 1824 the Spanish Empire in the Americas was destroyed. Spain had been weakened too much by the devastating Peninsular War (1807–14) to be able to raise enough troops to assert itself: and in any case, of the 42,000 soldiers it did send between 1811 and 1819, only 23,000 were left by 1820, the rest having succumbed to disease and desertion. Spain's fleet, destroyed at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805), was unable to blockade rebel ports or defeat the rebel fleet commanded by the radical British ex-naval officer Lord Thomas Cochrane (1775–1860). Sea power was vital to the South American independence movement, and it was British sea power that tipped the balance.

The British government, while remaining ostensibly neutral, turned a blind eye to men like Cochrane and their securing of supplies from Britain. It was very much in its interest to open up Latin America to free trade, and when Britain recognized the new states in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine proclaimed by the US government, which opposed any European intervention in the Americas, put an end to any further action. In 1826 the British Foreign Secretary George Canning (1770–1827) justified the long years of British support for Bolívar: 'I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.' By this time, Brazil had also become independent from Portugal, again as a result of the Napoleonic Wars. When the French conquered Portugal in 1807, the regent Dom João (1767–1826), acting for Queen Maria the Mad (1734–1816), sailed to Rio de Janeiro and set up court there, proclaiming Brazil a full sovereign state with all the rights and privileges that went with it. This reduced Portugal to the status of a province of Brazil, especially when Dom João, becoming king after Maria's death in 1816, decided to stay on in Rio. In 1820, Dom João was forced by political upheavals in Portugal to return to Lisbon as king. He was also obliged to accept the policy of reimposing mercantilist restrictions on trade with Brazil. This in turn led his son Dom Pedro (1798–1834), now regent in Rio, to bow to Brazilian mercantile pressure and become king of an independent constitutional monarchy in Brazil in 1822. Portuguese interference was defeated by Admiral Cochrane's fleet, and the British recognized Brazilian sovereignty in 1825.

The end of the European empires in the Americas was thus bound up inextricably with events in Europe: the ferment of ideas generated by the French Revolution; the assertion of British sea power in the drive to open up mercantilist-controlled areas of South America to free trade; the severing of connections between the Americas and European colonial metropoles by war; and the insistence of European states on imposing tight and in some cases new economic regulations and taxes on increasingly prosperous and autonomous American colonies. At the same time, events in the Americas also had a profound effect on Europe. For European liberals, radicals and revolutionaries, Latin America (with the exception of Brazil, where slavery continued virtually unchanged through the following decades) became a classic example of the success of movements of emancipation and liberation. Bolívar's wars of liberation provided a new model of heroism that in due course was to find further embodiment in the charismatic figure of Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–82), who was to return from exile in Uruguay and Brazil to lead the popular struggle for Italian unification.

The connections between Spanish American and European liberals were many and close. Latin American revolutionaries eagerly published justifications of their actions in Europe and corresponded with an astonishing variety of European thinkers. The father of Guatemalan independence, José Cecilio del Valle (1780–1834), for example, regularly exchanged letters with Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), who had himself travelled extensively in South and Central America. At the same time, Italian exiles such as Giuseppe Pecchio (1785–1835), forced to leave Italy for England after a failed uprising in 1821, advised Latin American liberals like del Valle, while a group of Italian émigrés including Claudio Linati (1790–1832) took an active part in the politics of the Mexican revolution's struggles between the factions of *Yorkinos* and *Escoceses*, named after respective Masonic lodges. The example of Latin America was particularly potent in southern Europe, where the linguistic distance was smaller than it was for Germans, Poles or Russians. The liberals and revolutionaries driven into exile by the reactionary regimes of the Restoration formed a kind of radical international whose connections spanned the Atlantic.

The events of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era changed the balance of forces between the different parts of the globe. This was not the outcome of some long-term process whereby Europe was becoming superior to other parts of the world in terms of competitiveness, religious dedication, or culture. Far-flung, pre-industrial empires were nothing

unusual in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century world. The Chinese Empire in particular still dwarfed European empires in size. The Ottoman Empire, though it had reached its apogee by around 1700, following the failure of its siege of Vienna in 1683, still covered a huge swathe of territory from south-eastern Europe through north-west Africa to the Indian Ocean and the Middle East. Until the 1750s Islamic states still ruled India and most of south-east Asia. In Africa large states such as Oyo or Benin controlled a diverse range of territories and peoples. But Napoleon's invasion of Egypt had undermined the hold of the Ottoman Empire on the region and threatened the empire's leadership of the Muslim world with its seizure of the teaching centre of the Al Azhar mosque in Cairo. A series of fundamentalist movements had posed an additional challenge to Ottoman legitimacy. The British had arrested the Mughal Emperor in India, and invaded royal palaces in Java. In China the expedition led by Lord George, Earl Macartney (1737–1806) to Beijing in 1793 had inaugurated a long and increasingly problematic relationship with the European states, while the death of the Qian Long emperor in 1799 had undermined the legitimacy of the Qing dynasty more directly, as factional squabbles broke out and revolts against the corruption of the regime flared up in one province after another.

The global wars that ended in 1815 undermined the legitimacy of rulers everywhere, not just in Europe. By the time they were over, the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world had shifted fundamentally. Other states across the globe had managed to increase economic production and prosperity through much of the eighteenth century, largely keeping pace with European economic development; but by 1815 they had fallen behind, under the impact of European competition. China was preoccupied with its own internal affairs, as were Russia and the United States; none of these looked for a global role in the nineteenth century, though all of them would have been capable of exercising it. France was exhausted by continuous war while the French economy, on the road to industrialization in the eighteenth century, was shattered by 1815. Along with Spain and Portugal, France had lost most of its overseas empire. The British had no serious rival by 1815. None the less, the prolonged conflicts of the period had stimulated European states to reform themselves root and branch; many, indeed, had been forced to adopt some of the principles advocated by the French, in order to beat Napoleon at his own game.

The Kingdom of Prussia, for instance, had been compelled to free the country's serfs from the most onerous dues and obligations to which they had been subjected, to modernize its army, and to reform bureaucratic administration of the state to make it more effective. Tsar Alexander I's

reforming minister, Mikhail Speransky (1772–1839), a brilliant administrator of humble origin, had led the centralization of Russia's ramshackle state apparatus, drastically reducing the power of the aristocracy over the direction of the country's affairs and rationalizing administration through a system of functional Ministries headed by a Council of State charged with scrutinizing imperial legislation. However, his wider plans for reform, including the introduction of representative institutions, were frustrated and led to his dismissal in 1812. By this time, nevertheless, Speransky had pushed through a major reform of education, with a new system of secondary schools and new universities founded in a number of major towns. In many parts of Europe, the influence of Napoleon had created greater efficiency in administration and the vital arts of troop recruitment and tax-gathering that went hand in hand with measures to stimulate economic production, allowing entrepreneurs to accumulate wealth for themselves and their families so long as they paid their dues to the state. Military efficiency was thus linked productively to economic growth in ways that the restrictive and rapacious state economic policies of China or the Ottoman Empire did not allow.

Above all, perhaps, it was European, and as a result of the wars, overwhelmingly British command of the seas that provided the basis for the new, dominant relationship of Europe with the rest of the world after 1815. It allowed Europeans to colonize further parts of the globe, like Australia or much of Africa, where the state was weak, non-existent or less well equipped with military technology. It provided Europeans with the means to throttle rival manufacturing centres through their control of seaborne trade. Driving this expansion was a set of ideologies, given concrete expression in the French Revolution and the international wars that followed it, which legitimized the conviction that European ideas and beliefs were superior to the great majority of those held by the rest of the world, except where, as in America, they had already taken hold. The ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity propagated by the French Revolution and claimed retrospectively by Napoleon had no immediate purchase here. Even Napoleon reintroduced slavery into Haiti after its abolition by the rebel leader Toussaint L'Ouverture (c.1743–1803), who was himself inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution. The assumption of European superiority in terms of power politics and economic and technological strength over the rest of the world had been widespread before 1789; for the century after 1815, it had for the first time a recognizable basis in reality. And crucially, in the longer term, the assault on the hereditary principle, beginning in America and spreading from France throughout Europe, fatally undermined the legitimacy of institutions such

as monarchy, aristocracy, slavery and serfdom. The consequences of this assault were to become ever more momentous as the century progressed.

THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

On 1 November 1814, following a lengthy series of preparatory meetings, the heads of state and representatives of the major European powers met in Vienna to decide how to put Europe back together again. With a brief and panic-stricken interruption for the duration of Napoleon's return and defeat at Waterloo, the Congress continued in session until 8 June the following year, and was followed by further negotiations that led to the final settlement in the Second Treaty of Paris on 20 November 1815. The Congress quickly became legendary for its many parties, entertainments and balls. Many of these were astonishingly extravagant. Estimates of the number of candles at the opening ball in this pre-electrical age varied from 12,000 to 16,000, amplified by mirrors that had one participant 'blinded and almost dizzy' as she paused at the top of the stairs. The occasion was marred only by the reported theft of a quarter of the 10,000 silver teaspoons provided for the occasion. At another ball, held in the Austrian riding school, some of the court ladies appeared dressed as the Elements. According to Anna Eynard-Lullin (1793–1868), the young wife of a wealthy Swiss participant in the proceedings, 'the prettiest of this whole masquerade was without question the Earth', represented by young women who 'wore dresses of silver cloth, their breasts were covered with diamonds, their neatly brushed hair framed their faces in the most modest manner, and this was topped by baskets of diamonds of a delightful shape, which encircled their heads and out of which cascaded quantities of flowers'. Alongside the music and dancing there was a magnificent buffet, offering, as Eynard-Lullin commented, 'a thousand good things to eat, ices, punch, broths, sweets of all sorts, and the finest delicacies'. On 6 December 1814 a ball thrown by Tsar Alexander in the Razumovsky Palace was accompanied by a thirty-six-course dinner served on twenty large tables. Shortly afterwards, the whole palace was burned to the ground in a fire caused by a malfunction in the recently installed heating system, destroying Prince Razumovsky's entire library along with his art collection, furniture, and much else besides. Many of the participants in the Congress, including the tsar, turned up to watch the spectacle as the blaze reached the roof and brought it crashing down on what was left of the contents.

With several thousand members of the aristocracy, major and minor royals, army officers, diplomats and hangers-on of various kinds staying

in the city for months on end, the opportunities for intrigue, flirtation and seduction were almost limitless, and the diaries of many of the participants are filled with details of the social whirl that accompanied the negotiations. The lead in the bargaining that went on at Vienna, and during the various meetings that took place before and after the Congress, was taken by Count (later Prince) Klemens von Metternich (1777–1859), a Rhenish nobleman now in his early forties. As a diplomatic official he had risen up the ranks during the Napoleonic era, playing the principal role in arranging the marriage of a Habsburg princess to Napoleon in 1810. By this time, Metternich, handsome, elegant, charming and vain, and also intelligent, energetic and very hard-working, had become Austrian Foreign Minister. He was to guide the foreign policy of the Habsburg Empire for over three decades; and he did so in the spirit of the *ancien régime* in which he had grown up and come of age. From his diplomatic experience in a variety of European courts, he had gained a wide-ranging knowledge of international affairs; and having lived through the Revolutionary and Napoleonic cataclysms, he was determined that upheavals of this kind would never happen again.

Metternich gained much of his influence from the power of the state he represented. The Congress was not held in Vienna simply for its geographical convenience, located at the centre of Europe. It was held there above all because Austria had taken the lead in putting together one coalition of European powers after another to fight the French Emperor. It had triumphed at last alongside Russia, Prussia and – deserting Napoleon at the crucial moment – smaller states such as Saxony and Württemberg in the stupendous four-day Battle of the Nations at Leipzig in 1813. With France shattered and defeated, the Austrian Empire was the most powerful state in Europe. Numbering around 23 million inhabitants at the beginning of the century, it was a force to be reckoned with, easily standing comparison with France (28 million) and Russia (around 30 million), while dwarfing Britain (11 million), Spain (11 million), and Prussia (16 million in 1815). Population strength did not automatically translate into political influence, but in an age still dominated by mass, infantry-based armies, it certainly counted for a very great deal. Much depended on the state's ability to mobilize its resources in time of war. Unlike many other states, Austria had not reformed itself root and branch during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras, and many leading Austrian politicians regarded the final victory as a vindication of traditional structures and methods. As much as any other of the major powers, therefore, Austria looked for a restoration of the state of affairs as it had been before 1789, a vision gaudily symbolized in the revival of pre-Revolutionary aristocratic

sociability in the balls and banquets that went on at the margins of the Congress of Vienna.

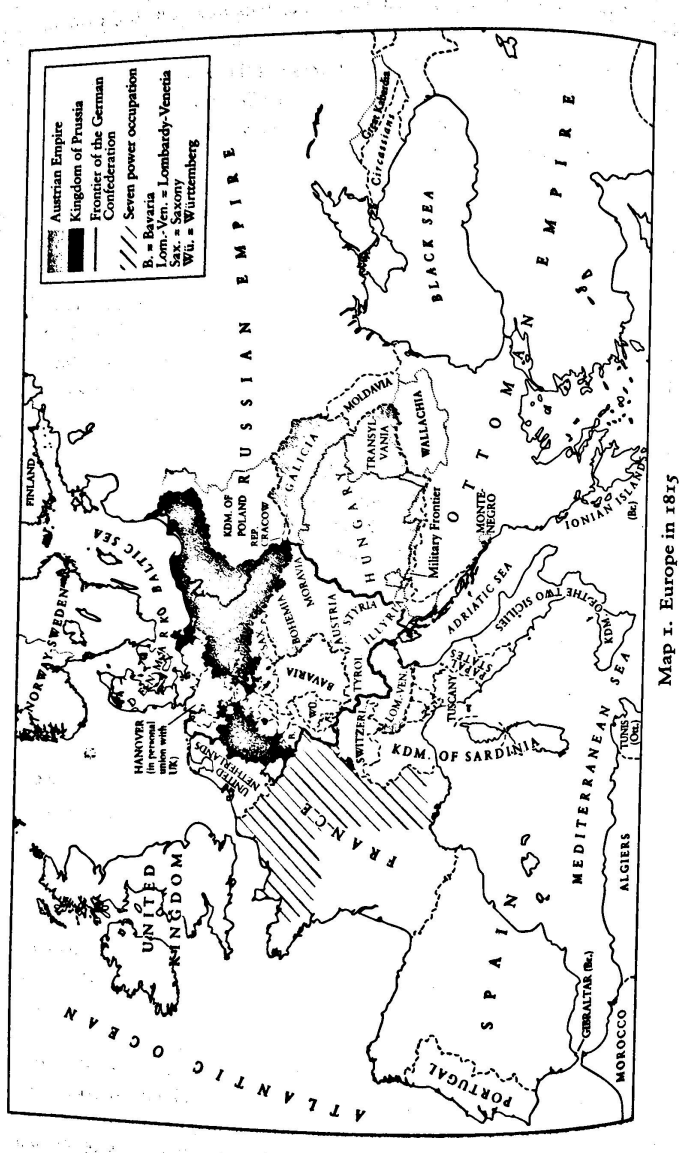
Certainly, in terms of population, Russia led the states of Europe, though not, at this stage, by very much, since it had yet to extend its domination over large parts of Central and Eastern Asia, and had only just, in 1813, seized the Caucasus from the Qajar dynasty of Persia. Tsar Alexander I, who had come to the throne in 1801 when his father, Pavel I (1754–1801), was murdered by Guards officers who resented his Prussian military style, was an enigmatic figure, dubbed by Napoleon 'the Northern Sphinx'. Initially liberal in inclination, Alexander granted a constitution to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, ruled by Russia from 1815 as the Kingdom of Poland or 'Congress Poland', and took some steps towards improving the educational system in Russia. However, not least as a result of Napoleon's invasion of 1812, he became steadily more religious and reactionary, and insisted on keeping legislative and administrative power in Russia to himself. Victory in 1815 seemed to confirm the viability of tsarist institutions, of autocracy and serfdom, underpinned by modest administrative and military reforms. It set Alexander's face against any further change. A Russian army had marched through Europe and was occupying Paris. This not only set the seal on Alexander's belief in the validity of his own mission, it also signalled that Russia had moved into the centre of European politics.

Thus it was Alexander who took the lead in 1815 in forming, with Austria and Prussia, a Holy Alliance, committing the three powers to mutual assistance if religion, peace or justice was threatened at any future point. Later joined by other, smaller states, the signatories agreed to rule in accordance with the principles of the Christian Gospel, so that war would henceforth be banished from Europe. The treaty reflected Alexander's strong tendency towards idealism, and in effect bound him, along with the two leading German powers, to achieving their aims by co-operation, rather than by fomenting discord among their rivals within the triumvirate. The British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh (1769–1822) dismissed the Holy Alliance privately as 'a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense'. But he was convinced enough of its utility in practice to get the Prince Regent (1762–1830, from 1820 King George IV) to subscribe to the Holy Alliance while at the same time avoiding any formal commitment on the part of the British government itself. The spectre of democracy raised by the French Revolution was as alarming to conservative British statesmen like Castlereagh as it was to the Prussian bureaucratic regime established after the cataclysmic defeat of the Prussian armies by Napoleon at the battles of Jena and Auerstedt or to the reactionary

administration led by Metternich in Vienna. The Holy Alliance held out the prospect of Russian intervention to suppress revolution in other parts of Europe, giving Russia a role it retained until the middle of the century, and then did not regain before the end of the Second World War; but it did so also by ensuring that Russia would not act alone, rather, in concert with the other major victorious powers.

Terrified of any renewal of war or violence, not least on the part of France, the negotiators at Vienna were concerned not only to restore and bolster the legitimacy of sovereigns but also to reconcile real and potential opposing interests as far as they could. This meant binding France into the new network of international relations. With a remarkable lack of national hatred or recrimination, the Austrians, Prussians, British and Russians included a representative of the French in the negotiations – Prince Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754–1838), who had been Napoleon's Foreign Minister but had switched sides at the right moment and now served the restored French monarchy. The wars, in the end, were seen as being fought not between nations but between regimes, even, in a way, between ideologies, which led a separate existence from nations and peoples. After Napoleon's 'Hundred Days', however, sentiment in the chancelleries of Europe turned against the French, who were now forced to restore looted artworks, pay an indemnity, and put up with the presence of nearly a million Allied soldiers, many of them German, and all of them living off the land, for a period of several months. Negotiations over territorial adjustments turned against France. The Second Treaty of Paris was a good deal harsher than the first one, which had been concluded before the Battle of Waterloo. Unable to prevent this, Talleyrand resigned his position in protest. Meanwhile Austria, Prussia, Russia and the United Kingdom agreed to declare war on France if any member of the Bonaparte family should return to power at any time in the next twenty years.

The Congress of Vienna and the negotiations that followed in the autumn of 1815 redrew the map of Europe one more time after all the many boundary changes of the previous quarter-century. The Austrians lost their part of the Netherlands, which went to the Dutch, but regained all their other territories, and established control over Lombardy and Venetia in northern Italy, as well as a large swathe of the Dalmatian coast. Austria was also given the Chair of the body representing the member states of a new 'German Confederation'. This had much the same borders as the old Holy Roman Empire, but consisted now of thirty-nine states instead of more than a thousand, as it had in the eighteenth century. It was not a national state. Some of its members were ruled by foreign



Map 1. Europe in 1815

monarchs, like the Kingdom of Hanover, whose king was the British monarch; others had extensive territories outside the Confederation, like the Habsburg Monarchy, which extended to the south and east of the Confederation, or the Kingdom of Prussia, whose territories ranged far beyond its borders to the boundaries of Russia. A number of the smaller states were completely surrounded by larger ones, with corresponding results for their freedom of action (indeed, by 1866, the thirty-nine member states had been further whittled down to thirty-four). At the Vienna Settlement, the Prussians gained territory in the Rhineland, including the Ruhr valley, as part of a series of buffer states intended to contain any future French expansion, including the Kingdom of the Netherlands; in the long run, the economic and later industrial resources of the Ruhr were to provide a major boost for Prussian economic and military power. Prussian strength was augmented by the acquisition of the former Swedish Pomerania, northern Saxony, Posen and Danzig, to counterbalance Russian control of 'Congress Poland'. All of this made Prussia one of the major winners. For its part, Russia gained huge swathes of territory, not only in Poland but also in Finland and Bessarabia. The ring of buffer states around France, stretching from an enlarged Kingdom of the Netherlands round by the Prussian Rhineland and through a reconstituted Swiss Confederation, was completed by the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, enlarged to include Genoa, Nice and part of Savoy.

The peace settlement also had to deal with the imperial possessions of the European powers involved in the conflicts of the previous decades. The British consolidated their empire while the Spanish and Portuguese would soon lose most of theirs; Malta gave the British another key point in the Mediterranean, while Ceylon, the Cape of Good Hope and Mauritius further secured sea routes to India. Underlining the moral principles that the powers claimed had infused the Vienna Settlement, the Congress formally outlawed the slave trade. In general, however, it excluded consideration of extra-European affairs; the idea, briefly mooted in the period immediately following the Congress of Vienna, of intervening in Latin America to save the colonial empires of the Spanish and Portuguese, was torpedoed by the promulgation in the United States in December 1823 of the Monroe Doctrine, which committed the USA to preventing European intervention in the affairs of the Americas. The British war on the United States of America, which had led to the burning down of the White House by a British expeditionary force in 1812, had been finally brought to an end in 1814, with disputes over the border with Canada, over fishing rights, and other relatively minor matters, settled or silently shelved. The exclusion of global political issues from the Vienna Settlement implicitly

allowed imperial rivalries, such as they were, to proceed without affecting intra-European politics. This was a startling change from the wars and conflicts of the previous century.

Through most of the nineteenth century, European states had little option but to acquiesce in British dominance of world trade and shipping, and British control of the high seas. The British did not try to exclude other nations from trading, as had been the custom in the age of mercantilism up to the late eighteenth century, but promoted free international trade, in a competition that their economic and industrial advantage would ensure for the ensuing decades that they would almost always win. It was not to be until the last quarter of the century that this advantage began to be challenged, and that extra-European conflicts between the major European powers began to have an effect on relations between states in Europe once again. Within Europe itself, the Vienna Settlement was as comprehensive as it could be. Nagging secondary problems such as relations between the Scandinavian states were resolved by recognizing Sweden's de facto suzerainty over Norway. Sweden was able to establish a tradition of neutrality in European politics that has lasted to the present day. An enlarged Switzerland was also guaranteed neutral status in return for an international guarantee of the Swiss Constitution, which was intended to bring to an end the internal conflicts that had caused inter-cantonal violence on a number of occasions in the past. The sheer destructiveness of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was a lesson that the leaders of all the powers, including ultimately France itself, were determined to learn.

Warfare had been a way of life in Europe for centuries by the time the Napoleonic Wars came to an end in 1815. At times it was truly devastating in its impact. The Thirty Years War, lasting from 1618 to 1648, is estimated directly or indirectly to have caused the deaths of anything up to a third of the entire population of Germany, for example, and in some areas such as Württemberg the proportion was even higher. The eighteenth century saw repeated and often prolonged wars ranging from the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14) through the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–8) and the Seven Years War (1756–63) to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars that lasted from 1792 to 1815, involving virtually every European state at one time or another. By contrast, the century between the Congress of Vienna, which met between 1814 and 1815, and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, witnessed only a small number of wars in Europe, and these were relatively limited in impact and duration and did not involve more than a handful of European states. Some of them were bilateral conflicts. They included the

Crimean War in 1854–6 between Britain, France, Turkey and Russia; the Wars of Italian Unification involving France, Austria and Piedmont-Sardinia; and the Wars of German Unification in 1864 between Austria, Prussia and Denmark, in 1866 between Prussia and Austria, and in 1870–1 between the German states and France. There were brief conflicts between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1828–9 and 1877–8, but these contrasted with the seven wars between the two states that had taken place in the eighteenth century and up to 1815, lasting nearly a quarter of a century between them. Altogether, the death rate of men in battle between 1815 and 1914 was seven times less than that of the previous century.

How can we explain this startling contrast? It has been most persuasively explained by the abandonment on the part of the European states of the traditional emphasis on the Balance of Power, the doctrine according to which no single state should be allowed to become so strong that it dominated all the rest, and its replacement by a network of collaborative institutions, summed up in the idea of the 'Concert of Europe', whose main purpose was the maintenance of peace. Leading members of European states, including after a brief hiatus, crucially, France, became used to meeting on a frequent basis to thrash out their differences, and managed to take common action on a number of occasions, despite their opposing interests. What lay behind this powerful desire for co-operation was, of course, fear of revolution and upheaval, which, on the evidence of the 1790s and 1800s, could, it was believed, very easily cause international instability and conflict. When the Great Powers collaborated, therefore, from the 1820s to the 1840s, it was as often as not in order to put down liberal revolutions of one kind or another. But there was more to it than that. To begin with, the balance of power still in fact counted for a good deal. Ever since the time of Louis XIV, the main contender for European domination had been France, in wealth and population and military organization by far the greatest of the European powers. But the prospect of French hegemony was destroyed forever by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The other European states remained deeply apprehensive about French ambitions for decades to come, but in fact the defeat of Napoleon was decisive. France's population growth was beginning to stagnate, and the country was unable to make good the loss of nearly one and a half million men on the battlefield. France's share of the European population became steadily smaller. For the rest of the nineteenth century, there was more or less an equilibrium of power between the major continental European states, and on a larger scale, European colonial rivalries, so disruptive in the previous century, were now settled by international

agreement, building on the experience of the Congress system and the Concert of Europe.

Some historians have claimed that it was the *ancien régime* that ultimately triumphed over Napoleon in 1814–15, and certainly there were many notable continuities across the Revolutionary and Napoleonic divide. In the manner in which it was negotiated, the peace settlement seemed in some respects to hark back to earlier habits of cabinet diplomacy in the eighteenth century, when territories were transferred from one sovereign to another without any regard for the wishes of their inhabitants. 'I spent the day carving up Europe like a piece of cheese,' wrote Metternich to his mistress at one point during the Congress. Nobody asked the Rhinelanders whether they wanted to be part of Prussia, or the people of northern Italy what they felt about being ruled from Vienna. But in fact, the French Revolution had among other things fundamentally changed the nature of sovereignty in Europe. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a major, perhaps the major cause of European wars had been dynastic disputes arising on the death of a sovereign – the War of the Spanish Succession, for example, or the War of the Austrian Succession. This was no longer the case after 1815. For all the insistence of monarchs like Louis XVIII or Alexander I on their Divine Right to rule, the basis of sovereignty had shifted perceptibly from individuals and families to nations and states. Before 1815, all international treaties were considered to have been rendered invalid on the death of a sovereign, and had to be immediately renewed with the signature of the new sovereign if they were not to lapse. After 1815, this rule no longer applied. Treaties like those of 1814–15 were concluded between states, not between individual monarchs, and retained their validity unless and until one or other party deliberately abrogated them. The prince or ruler became, in effect, the executor of national or state sovereignty guaranteed by international agreement with the virtual force of law. Of course, there were to be succession disputes in the nineteenth century too, notably over Spain and Schleswig-Holstein, but they gained their potency largely from their exploitation by state governments for national purposes, and had no real impact of their own. Dynastic marriages dwindled to mere symbols of amity between nations. Similarly, armies now owed their allegiance to states rather than to individual sovereigns; the old eighteenth-century system of mercenary armies and soldiers selling themselves to the highest bidder had gone forever. The newly restored sovereigns had to adapt or perish. The 1820s were to show that many of them had failed to learn this lesson.

REFORGING THE CHAIN OF TIME

Nowhere was the changed nature of the relationship between rulers and ruled brought about by the French Revolution more obvious than in France itself. On his restoration to the throne, Louis XVIII's allegiance to the *ancien régime* was symbolized by his replacement of the *tricolor* with the royal *fleur de lys* as the official flag of France, his refusal to recognize the Legion of Honour instituted by Napoleon, and his official announcement that 1814 was the nineteenth year of his reign. When a courtier told him in 1814 of Napoleon's abdication: 'Sire, you are King of France', he replied: 'Have I ever ceased to be?' The court rituals, titles and ceremonies of the *ancien régime* came back in their full pomp. Louis XVIII rejected the constitution voted through by Napoleon's last Senate after it had formally deposed the emperor, because he did not accept that his royal authority derived from an implicit contract between king and people. It came, he said, from Divine Right, and in the Declaration of Ouen, which served as the basis for the French constitution under the restored monarchy, he made it clear that he was granting the French people their rights of his own free will, as 'Louis, by the Grace of God King of France and Navarre'.

Yet for all his deep-rooted belief in the legitimacy of the *ancien régime*, Louis recognized, especially after the alarms of the 'Hundred Days', that he could not entirely turn the clock of history back to 1788. He agreed not to initiate any restoration of land confiscated during the Revolution to the Church, the nobility or the Crown. Half a million people had purchased this property, and it was politically impracticable to force them, or the people to whom they had sold it on, to disgorge it. The Napoleonic Law Code was retained. The rights of hereditary nobles to posts in the military and the civil administration, abolished by the introduction of the 'career open to the talents' during the Revolution, were not restored. Freedom of religious practice remained in force despite the regime's proclamation of Catholicism as the state religion. The Revolution's division of the country into *départements* was left intact, as was its organization of Paris into *arrondissements*, both originally introduced in 1790. Summing up these measures, the king declared that it was his intention to 'reforge the chain of time', portraying these changes as part of a long series of reforms granted by the French monarchy since the days of Louis the Fat in the Middle Ages (a king whom Louis XVIII resembled in more than one respect). At the insistence of the Duke of Wellington, he appointed two of Napoleon's chief aides to leading positions – Talleyrand as Foreign Minister and head of the government, and Joseph Fouché (1759–1820) as

Minister of Police – 'vice leaning on the arm of crime', as Chateaubriand put it. Louis also realized that the Estates General could not be revived, and that the pressure on the restored French monarchy from the victorious Allies to avoid a repetition of the problems that had contributed to the Revolution necessitated the creation of some element of constitutional rule. So he established a bicameral legislature, consisting of a Chamber of Peers and a Chamber of Deputies. Their consent was required for all taxes to be levied, although he reserved to the Crown the right to initiate legislation.

The new constitutionalism was undermined, however, by the fact that Louis XVIII could dissolve the Chamber of Deputies and call new elections at any time, overriding the provision that each year one-fifth of its members were to submit themselves for re-election. He alone possessed the right to declare war, ministers were appointed by and responsible to him and not to the legislature, and, crucially, he could issue 'regulations and ordinances necessary for the safety of the state', which in effect gave him the power to abrogate the constitution should he choose. This, then, was not really a constitutional monarchy; it was an absolute monarchy limited by constitutional provisos that could be dispensed with at any time. Moreover, the Upper House was nominated by the king, and the Chamber of Deputies was elected by men over forty who paid 300 francs or more in taxes per year. This had the effect of creating a very small electorate, numbering no more than 90,000 from a population of 28 million. In Britain, by comparison, with a population less than half this size, the electorate numbered 440,000 even before the 1832 Reform Act, which added another 216,000. Moreover, the narrowness of the franchise for the new French legislature led to the election of a Chamber composed of 'Ultras', hard-line royalists who ousted Talleyrand's government and initiated a purge of former revolutionaries and Bonapartists. The new Chamber of Peers, acting as a court, sentenced some of these men to death, and drove others into exile, including both Fouché and Talleyrand.

If they were going to preserve the monarchy in the face of such intransigence, Louis XVIII's ministers, led by Élie Decazes (1780–1860), a former aide to Napoleon and his family, knew that the regime needed a broader base in society. Merchants, lawyers and others were turning to the liberal ideas of the early phase of the 1789 Revolution, outraged at the domination of politics and administration by the restored aristocracy. Attempting 'to nationalize the royalty and to royalize France', Decazes got Louis to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies. A new one was elected, consisting mainly of large landowners and higher state officials, many of whom had served under Napoleon. But before Decazes could get very far,

the Duc de Berry (1778–1820), second son of Louis' younger brother the Comte d'Artois (1757–1836) and thus (since Louis had no children) third in line to the throne, was stabbed to death as he was leaving the Paris Opera on 13 February 1820 by a disgruntled saddler. 'We are all assassinated!' was Decazes' despairing comment.

In the ensuing reaction, Decazes was dismissed, and his immediate predecessor the Duc de Richelieu (1766–1822), a conservative who had spent his years of exile before 1815 in the service of the tsar, was reinstated. Before long, he too had been ousted to make way for a royal favourite, the Comte de Villèle (1773–1854), an ultra-reactionary whose aim was to restore the monarchy of pre-revolutionary times in undiluted form. When Louis died on 16 September 1824 of morbid obesity, the throne went to the Comte d'Artois, who took the title of Charles X (1757–1836). In his late sixties, socialized under the *ancien régime*, and fiercely conservative, the new monarch had made common cause with the Ultras, to the dismay even of his elder brother, and he persuaded Villèle to push through a law against sacrilege, criminalizing offences against the Church: the profanation of sacred vessels was made punishable by life imprisonment, and the desecration of the Host by death. He followed this with a law providing financial compensation to the nobles who had lost their lands during the Revolution. Symbolizing his hard-line stance in a magnificently traditional coronation ceremony, Charles tightened press censorship and increased the power of the Church, which in 1824 was given control over the appointment of all primary-school teachers.

These reactionary moves, continuing the policies of the Ultras led by Villèle and before him Richelieu, were almost calculated to arouse opposition from liberals. This was articulated partly through critical newspapers and magazines, two of which were founded in 1817–18 by the writer Benjamin Constant (1767–1830), and partly through political campaigning. This resulted in Constant being elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1819 and the Marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834), veteran of the French and American Revolutions, elected the previous year. The liberals were funded by bankers like Jacques Laffitte (1767–1844) and Casimir Perier (1777–1832), who felt excluded from social and political influence by the Restoration aristocracy; Laffitte had been ousted as Governor of the Bank of France in 1817 for defending the freedom of the press. The debate on the legacy of the Revolution was fuelled by young journalists and historians such as Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877), whose multi-volume history of the Revolution, published between 1823 and 1827, justified the constitutional monarchy as an inevitable outcome of the human desire for freedom, but argued that the 'excesses of the multitude' had perverted the

Revolution. In similar vein, François Guizot (1787–1874), who had been appointed professor of history at the Sorbonne in 1812 at the age of twenty-five, taught that the essence of the Revolution lay in its early constitutional reformism, not in the Terror, and during the period when his lectures were banned by the government (1822–8), he put forward his cautious liberal arguments in the press. These two men were to play pivotal roles in French politics during the decades that followed.

Alongside this moderate and respectable liberal opposition there also emerged a wide variety of secret societies, some disguised as drinking clubs (where political songs were sung), some working under the cover of businesses, some operating as Masonic lodges, some adopting more explicit titles such as the Knights of Liberty. These spanned Europe and had connections with Latin America in a kind of radical liberal international that transcended political boundaries and was driven on by political exiles whose life took them from place to place in pursuit of their ideals. The most radical and the most active was the collection of small clandestine groups known as the *charbonnerie*, or association of charcoal-burners, inspired by similar organizations in Italy. They brought together unemployed Napoleonic civil servants, frustrated university students, and officers and NCOs from the imperial armies forced to eke out a meagre existence on half-pay. Napoleon's late propagation of an image as a defender of constitutional liberty helped unite the Republicans and Bonapartists among them. The conspirators attempted to foment military uprisings in garrisons, including Paris in 1820, Belfort and Saumur in 1821, and Strasbourg and La Rochelle in 1822; none succeeded, and the last-named led to the public execution of four sergeants. The event was witnessed among others by the student Auguste Blanqui (1805–81), who was inspired to join the revolutionary movement by the widespread belief that the men had died as 'martyrs for liberty'. Altogether in this period twelve members of the secret societies were put to death. The failure of their enterprises led to internal dissension, and the *charbonnerie* had more or less ceased to exist by the middle of the 1820s. Blanqui himself was put out of action for a while by injuries received in a street brawl in 1827. It was not therefore military insurrection but liberal parliamentarism that offered the main threat to the rule of the Ultras in France by the late 1820s. The return of an increased number of liberal deputies in the elections of 1827 led to the resignation of Villèle, and when his successor the Vicomte de Martignac (1778–1832) tried to negotiate with them, he was dismissed in favour of Jules de Polignac (1780–1847), who had been imprisoned by Napoleon for twelve years and was fully committed to the king's belief in the idea of absolute monarchy. Neither revolution nor reform seemed to

be making any progress in France in the face of royal intransigence, and the prospects for change in a liberal direction seemed remote as the decade drew to a close.

A similar picture can be drawn of post-Napoleonic politics in Germany. Here too, in most of the states of the German Confederation, not everything had been restored. Between 1815 and 1819 a whole swathe of south German states adopted constitutions with representative assemblies, designed not least to lend them an aura of popular legitimacy in their efforts to revise the boundaries established in the peace settlement to their own advantage and to the disadvantage of their rivals. Quarrels such as these prevented the south German states from combining effectively against Austrian and Prussian domination of the Confederation. As a result, Metternich, provided he obtained the agreement of the Prussian government, was able to push through most of the measures he wanted in the Diet of the Confederation (where representatives of the member states met). His task was made easier by disputes between the leading Prussian reformers that let in a more conservative set of ministers who persuaded King Friedrich Wilhelm III (1770–1840) to renege on his earlier promise to grant a constitution.

Volunteers returning from the war against Napoleon were often disappointed by the hegemony exercised by the princes over the German Confederation. They had fought to liberate not just Prussia or Hesse or Saxony from French domination but also, and in the eyes of some, even more, Germany as a whole. A few, like the educational reformer Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who had founded Berlin University in 1810, thought that the Confederation might provide the basis for stronger national institutions, but others, particularly the young students who formed the *Burschenschaft* movement at Jena in 1815, thought that only when its individual, overwhelmingly authoritarian member states were swept away and replaced by a single national constitution could true unity be achieved. They drew their inspiration from the writer Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860), who had been born in Swedish Pomerania and studied theology at Greifswald and Jena. Arndt had developed a strong sense of linguistically based German nationality after being driven into exile following Napoleon's occupation of his homeland in 1806. A gifted publicist, Arndt called in 1814 for the unification of Germany under a constitutional monarchy with its capital in Berlin (Vienna was too multinational for him), and stressed the underlying unity of the German people, which he wanted to see expressed in a common language, common rituals and symbols, and even a common style of dress; the mobilization of patriotic volunteers against Napoleon in 1812–13 had shown the way.

Such ideas inspired the students of the *Burschenschaft*, who wore the black, red and gold colours of the volunteers. In October 1817 they celebrated the anniversary of Martin Luther's Reformation at the Wartburg castle, where Luther had translated the Bible into vernacular German, by listening to fiery speeches extolling their Germanness. The festival earned subsequent notoriety through the burning of more than two dozen books and magazines, including the Napoleonic Law Code, German tracts from the Napoleonic period urging collaboration with the French, and contemporary pamphlets criticizing the students' aims and activities. To procure real books would have been too expensive for them, poor as they were; instead, the students threw labelled balls of waste paper onto the flames. The event was condemned by the young poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) as ignorant and medieval. However, his famous pronouncement, 'That was only a Prologue: where books are burned, in the end people will be burned as well', referred to the burning of the Qur'an by the Spanish Inquisition during the conquest of Granada in 1499, not to the Wartburg event.

Among the books consigned to the flames at the Wartburg was a *History of the German Empire* by the popular and extremely prolific playwright and journalist August von Kotzebue (1761–1819), who had angered the *Burschenschaft* by pouring scorn upon their ideas and activities in his magazine. Kotzebue had lived in exile in Russia and joined the Russian foreign service, in which capacity he returned to Germany on the fall of Napoleon and reported on German affairs to the tsar. He was hardly in a position to be the spy that some believed he was, but he did support the conservative ideals of Alexander I. Together with his ridiculing of the *Burschenschaft* this persuaded the twenty-three-year-old Karl Sand (1795–1820), a theology student and member of the organization's radical wing, that Kotzebue deserved to die. Visiting the playwright in his home on 23 March 1819, Sand stabbed him repeatedly before rushing out into the street and stabbing himself in the chest, crying out 'Long live the German Fatherland!' He survived, to be tried and publicly beheaded the following year. While many commentators, even supporters of the nationalist movement, viewed the deed with revulsion, others regarded Sand as a hero and a martyr; the executioner, who sympathized with the ideals of the nationalists, dismantled the bloodstained scaffold after the event and used the wood to build a secret summer house in a nearby vineyard, placing it at the disposal of members of the *Burschenschaft* for their meetings.

Metternich seized on this event, and an unsuccessful assassination attempt against the Nassau government official Karl von Ibell (1780–1834) by the apothecary and *Burschenschaft* member Karl Löning (1791–1819)

as the pretext to introduce a drastic package of repressive measures. These were formulated by representatives of ten German states at the spa town of Karlsbad in August 1819 and ratified by the German Diet in Frankfurt the following month. They obliged the member states to exercise a close control over universities, dismissing any teacher who advocated 'harmful doctrines hostile to public order or subversive of existing governmental institutions' and ensuring that he would not be re-employed in any other institution of higher learning. Students found to be members of secret societies like the *Burschenschaft* were to be banned from all universities and debarred from entering public employment. All periodicals had to be subject to censorship by a central body before publication. A special commission was set up to investigate the revolutionary movement and take action against it. The *Burschenschaft* disintegrated – members had numbered only 500 even at its height – and organized nationalism more or less ceased to operate. The police forces of individual states exchanged information about alleged subversives, engaged in the close surveillance of clubs, coffee houses and other meeting places, and looked with suspicion on any kind of voluntary association. Cheap pamphlets and broadsheets were rigorously censored or banned altogether, so that it was difficult for anyone not in government to exchange ideas or keep up with the political news, such as it was. The few who favoured constitutional reform and national unity began to call themselves 'liberals', picking up a term already used by reformers in Spain, but they were unable to agree on any kind of common programme.

The triumph of reaction in Germany was embodied in the constitution of the Confederation, which was revised in July 1820 to provide for any member state to intervene in the affairs of another to preserve order. Previous references to Jewish emancipation and religious toleration were dropped. Governments in the member states of the Confederation moved to ensure that legislative assemblies, where they existed, did not become vehicles of liberal protest. They refused to allow the publication of parliamentary debates, and forced deputies to sit in pre-assigned seats so that they could not group themselves together into factions. Everywhere, elections were indirect. Censorship restricted campaigning so tightly that there was little chance of public debate. As in France and indeed everywhere in the 1820s where elections were held, property qualifications, often very elaborately drafted, ensured that only the wealthy could be elected. The result was widespread indifference even among those who did have the vote; in 1816, for example, only 5 per cent of the (in any case, very small) electorate bothered to turn up to local elections in Königsberg. In some areas representative assemblies consisted of old-style Estates,

limited to the nobility; in Prussia, these institutions, set up in 1823, were intended to advise the government rather than engage in debate, and often met in a room of one of the royal palaces. Nevertheless, the fact remained that representative institutions, however limited and circumscribed they might have been in their constitution and their powers, did exist in most German states in the 1820s. The idea of 'Enlightened Despotism' had died in the French Revolution and could not be revived. Government was more broadly based; German states were run bureaucratically, not autocratically, and a rule-bound system of administration was widely regarded as a more effective limitation on the arbitrary power of the sovereign than representative assemblies were ever likely to be. Often, in any case, the same men belonged to both. As the young Otto von Bismarck (1815–98), who did not enjoy his early experience as a civil servant, remarked in 1838, 'in order to take part in public life, one must be a salaried and dependent servant of the state, one must belong completely to the bureaucratic caste'.

REVOLT AND REPRESSION

The widespread desire among European governments to build secure collective defences against the possibility of any recurrence of the devastating wars of the previous decades found its expression not only in the idea of the 'Holy Alliance' but also in a wide range of other measures designed to foster co-operation between the victorious powers. These included especially the Quadruple Alliance, urged by the British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh, in which diplomatic representatives of Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia, and, later, France as well, would meet on a regular basis in general conferences to maintain international co-operation. Meetings between representatives of these Great Powers brokered, and enforced, a series of deals, including the rejection of a Bavarian claim on part of the territory of the Grand Duchy of Baden at the Congress of Aachen in 1819, and a downward revision of the amount of compensation to the Allies required of France for the destruction caused by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. They also brought the Allied occupation of France to an end, admitting the French informally to the Concert of Europe. Monarchy was to be the foundation of order, and in principle it was to be absolute, tempered only where unavoidable by traditional legislatures such as Estates or assemblies of notables, or by representative assemblies whose powers were strictly limited. These principles were not fully shared by the British, whose own constitution contained a powerful elected legislature, and through the 1820s the differences between the British and the Austrian understandings of these arrangements repeatedly surfaced to make common action more difficult.

Already by this time, however, it was becoming clear that liberal constitutionalism, inspired by the legacy of French Revolutionary and Napoleonic rule, and by the ideals of popular sovereignty expressed in practical terms by widespread uprisings against the French in the last years of their European domination, was not dead. Its supporters in many parts of Europe grew increasingly dissatisfied with the authoritarian policies of the Restoration. In Spain, King Fernando VII (1784–1833), restored by Napoleon to the throne after the defeat of the French armies in the Peninsular War, rejected the liberal constitution passed in 1812 and brought back the previous absolutist regime. He readmitted the previously banned Jesuits, imposed strict censorship, and restored to the aristocracy and the Church the land seized during the Napoleonic occupation. Ministers were made individually and directly responsible to the king, and barred from discussing policy collectively. Fernando hired and fired them at will, resulting in an average tenure of ministerial office between 1814 and 1820 of no more than six months. To last any length of time government ministers had to demonstrate their allegiance to reactionary principles in the most open ways possible. The War Minister General Francisco de Eguia (1750–1827) signalled his adherence to the *ancien régime* by wearing an eighteenth-century wig. The king regressed even further by banning the Freemasons and reintroducing the Inquisition, which immediately began hunting down heretics.

All this made it difficult for the government to respond coherently or effectively to the insurrections in Spanish America, the more so since Fernando's government adopted an intransigent line and refused to make any concessions to the rebels. Financial troubles caused by the legacy of the French occupation and the post-war economic depression were made worse by the costs of sending military expeditions across the Atlantic in a vain attempt to defeat the independence movement and restore control. By 1820 the Spanish state was effectively bankrupt, unable even to pay the army it was mustering for another expedition to Latin America. In January 1820 junior army officers 'pronounced' publicly in favour of the 1812 constitution, inaugurating a tradition of the military *pronunciamiento* that lasted for well over a century. Fernando had bypassed many of the military men and guerrilla leaders who had fought against Napoleon, driving them even further towards liberalism. They were joined by disgruntled civilian politicians, many of whom had been arrested or exiled, or were frustrated by the royal clampdown on public life and free discussion. The shambolic inefficiency of the Spanish police allowed these

men to put together a whole series of conspiracies, mainly based on Masonic lodges which of course continued to meet in secret despite the police ban on their activities. These conspiracies all failed, including one plan to kill the king as he was visiting a brothel. But in 1820 the conspirators were backed by the army rank and file, who were appalled at the thought of being taken off on yet another futile expedition to the Americas. The uprising gained strength in the provinces, and was carried to victory by street demonstrations outside the royal palace, expressing popular detestation of the heavy taxation imposed by the government in order to try and rescue its crumbling finances. Fernando was forced to recognize the 1812 constitution, to summon a *Cortes* (legislative assembly), and to make way for a liberal government for the next three years. However, he consistently vetoed all the resolutions of the *Cortes*, and did everything he could to frustrate the actions of the constitutionalists. Amid growing chaos and disorder, accompanied by escalating violence in town and country, the king appealed for international intervention. By 1823 the *Cortes* had deposed the recalcitrant monarch, and radicals were beginning to threaten a repeat of the September Massacres of Revolutionary Paris. One of them, the Jacobin Juan Romero Alpuente (1762–1835) – 'ugly, dirty, and badly dressed', as one of his critics disdainfully called him – alluded to the massacres and reminded his audience menacingly that 'fourteen thousand were executed in one night'.

From the point of view of the Holy Alliance, the growing chaos and the revolutionary threat in Spain could not be tolerated. The crisis there was compounded by similar events in Italy. Here, the ultimate symbol of restoration, the eighteenth-century wig, was also worn by King Vittorio Emanuele I (1759–1824) when he returned from exile in 1814 to rule the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia. He also restored the pre-Napoleonic legal system, except in formerly independent Genoa where local objections were too strong. He reinstated the privileges of the aristocracy (including its sole right to occupy boxes in opera houses, a matter of some cultural importance in Italy), and he allowed feudalism to continue on the island of Sardinia. Jews and Protestants lost the rights they had gained under French rule. Vittorio Emanuele handed control over censorship and education to the Jesuits. In the Duchy of Modena, Napoleon's reforms were abolished, as they were, unsurprisingly, in the central Italian states ruled by Pope Pius VII (1742–1823). Among other things the Pope got rid of street lighting and vaccination against smallpox as objectionable modern innovations. In some other parts of the peninsula many of Napoleon's judicial and administrative reforms were retained. Such was the case, for example, in the Bourbon-ruled Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Most liberal

of all was the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in the north, where Enlightenment values had long informed the practice of government. Austrian influence, cemented by armed garrisons in the Papal States, was present to deter any dangerous recrudescence of liberalism.

Here too, however, discontent began to emerge among the educated men who had been rudely expelled from the posts they had occupied in the Napoleonic era to make way for returning aristocrats, while in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, where a good number of them were allowed to stay in office, there were not enough administrative jobs to go round. The centralizing policies of the Kingdom were resented by local notables, who saw their autonomy being reduced. Conscription caused opposition among the lower classes. The Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia retained most of Napoleon's reforms, yielding a Habsburg-ruled centralized administration, state control over senior Church appointments, no restoration of confiscated lands, and the retention in office of the great majority of the civil servants appointed in the Napoleonic era. Nevertheless, the fact that the administration of the Habsburg Monarchy was centralized in Vienna gave these civil servants a sense of impotence, underlined by the fact that promotion was available only to German-speakers in the Habsburg capital. Military conscription, which now lasted for eight years instead of four, was made more comprehensive, and Italian recruits were likely to find themselves serving in far-flung parts of the Monarchy, north and east of the Alps. Successive governors of the Kingdom warned Metternich not to repeat the mistake of the reforming eighteenth-century Habsburg monarch Joseph II (1741–90), who had tried to impose uniformity and central control over the entire empire. 'The Lombards,' one of them declared, 'have been and always will be unable to get used to the Germanic forms imprinted on the government of their country.'

The frustration of local notables in the face of state centralization was shared by the men who had been involved in the resistance to Napoleon. In southern Italy they had organized themselves from about 1806, in Masonic-style secret societies known as the *carbonari*, the model for their French counterparts (the *charbonnerie*) after 1815. These groups had been encouraged by the British to conspire against Napoleonic rule. Opposition to absolutism was a key element in the movement, and after the fall of Napoleon its members found a new object for their activities in what they regarded as the tyranny of the restored governments that had taken power in many parts of the peninsula. Inspired by the example of the Spanish liberals, the *carbonari* rose in revolt. Joined by discontented soldiers, they marched through Naples and forced King Ferdinando I (1751–1825) of the Two Sicilies, popularly known as *Re Nasone* (Conky

King, from his unusually large nose), to adopt the Spanish constitution of 1812. The unrest spread up the peninsula, and liberals in Piedmont started to plan a rising against the reactionary monarch. In March 1821 the tricolor was raised by discontented officers in a number of Piedmontese garrisons, and the frightened Vittorio Emanuele abdicated, to be succeeded by his intransigently reactionary brother Carlo Felice (1765–1831), who issued a stern warning from his safe retreat outside the Kingdom, in Modena, that he would not tolerate anything that diminished 'the plenitude of royal authority'. Meanwhile, the leader of the Piedmontese insurrection, Count Santorre di Santarosa (1783–1825), was appointed Minister of War by the regent, the young and supposedly liberal Carlo Alberto (1798–1849), and began to prepare an invasion of Austrian-controlled Lombardy.

These events in Italy and Spain posed a collective challenge of major proportions to the conservative programme adopted at Vienna. Initially, though the Russian tsar urged intervention, the Austrians and the British did not take the Spanish situation very seriously, but when the liberal movement spread to Italy, the Austrians felt threatened. At a Congress held towards the end of 1820 in Troppau, Austrian Silesia, the Holy Alliance agreed to take action, despite the objections of the British. These decisions were reinforced at another Congress in Laibach early in 1821, attended by Ferdinando, who had been released from captivity in Naples after promising to respect the constitution – a promise he repudiated as soon as he reached safety. The Austrians sent an army into the Papal States and down to Naples, which they reached in the face of minimal resistance on 23 March. Divided between supporters of the democratic *carbonari* and the moderate liberal adherents of the former Napoleonic ruler Joachim Murat (1767–1815), many of whom had served in his administration, the revolutionaries could offer only minimal resistance. In Sicily news of the uprising in Naples had sparked a popular revolt with riots in the streets, crowds storming the prisons in Palermo, and bands of artisans beheading two of the leading constitutional liberals. The artisan guilds refused to give their support to the liberals. These events reflected among other things the depths of the post-war economic depression in the region, but they frightened the local notables, and outside Palermo the rebels had few supporters, so that they were unable to defeat the Neapolitan army on the island, and with the arrival of the Austrians the uprising came to an end.

Meanwhile the Austrians also sent an army into northern Italy, where they also easily defeated the rebels, forcing more than a thousand into exile. They included Santarosa, who lived for a time under an assumed name in Paris before he was discovered by the police and expelled again,

ending up in Nottingham, where he eked out a living teaching French and Italian. The plight of the refugees inspired the fifteen-year-old Genoese student Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–72), who encountered them on the quayside at Genoa in April 1821 looking for a ship to take them to Spain and begging for money 'for the exiles of Italy'. 'That day,' Mazzini later recalled, 'was the first on which there took shape confusedly in my mind . . . the thought that we Italians *could* and therefore *ought* to struggle for the liberty of our fatherland.' In the wake of the Austrian victories, ninety-seven *carbonari* and other rebels were sentenced to death (though all but seven had fled and were sentenced *in absentia*). The sentences of the rest were commuted to imprisonment. In the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies the restored King Ferdinando I was not so lenient, and under his Minister of Police, Antonio Minutolo, Prince of Canosa (1768–1838), there were mass arrests and trials, with several members of the *carbonari* being executed in public and many others sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. This was too much even for Metternich, who successfully put pressure on the vengeful monarch to dismiss his minister. Authoritarian reaction was now the order of the day. In the Papal States, the new Pope, Leo XII (1760–1829), banned Jews from owning property and strengthened the power of the Jesuits over education. Everywhere in Italy there were mass dismissals of civil servants thought to have participated in, or been sympathetic to, the revolts. As Carlo Felice, the new King of Piedmont, put it, as far as the mass of ordinary citizens were concerned, 'the bad are all educated and the good are all ignorant'; so only the army and the Church could be trusted.

The Congress Powers found it more difficult to decide what to do about the situation in Spain. Eventually, in April 1823, the French sent in an army to restore Fernando VII to the throne, much to the disapproval of Metternich. Although the Spanish revolutionaries inevitably recalled the resistance against Napoleon and 'the energy and decision that had astonished the world in 1808', the 100,000 French troops were careful to avoid looting and paid for their food and supplies. They met with no serious resistance either from the Spanish people or from the Spanish army, whose generals quickly made their peace with the monarch. Fernando had spent the last days of his captivity in Seville throwing paper darts from the roof of his lodgings as the French army approached. He now emerged to dismiss the liberal ministers and reinstitute a royal despotism, purging the army and clamping down on freedom of thought at every level. The army was reformed, on the basis of files drawn up on the political sympathies of every single officer. None of this was much to the liking of the French occupying forces, who urged reconciliation. Some royalist officers also

considered Fernando's purge went too far; the Captain-General of Catalonia, for example, allowed liberal professors to take home suspect books from the university library before sending in a delegation of royalist 'purifiers'. In general, however, the repression succeeded, and the few further attempts at liberal uprisings were easily swept aside in the absence of popular support.

The example of the Spanish liberals was an inspiration not only in Italy but also in Portugal. The complex cross-currents of the era were illustrated by the brief career of the liberal Portuguese army officer Gomes Freire de Andrade (1757–1817), who had served in Napoleon's Portuguese Legion and become imperial governor of Dresden. Grandmaster of the Freemasons in Lisbon, Freire had been arrested for his involvement in an alleged plot to overthrow the British military authority under Viscount Beresford (1768–1854), a British general who had been appointed head of the Portuguese army with the title of Marshal. The transnational careers of both men, characteristic of the immediate post-Napoleonic years, ended in failure: Freire was convicted of treason and executed in 1817, while a motley crew of middle-class professionals and army officers, inspired by the January uprising in Spain, 'pronounced' against the British in August 1820. Beresford, who had gone to Brazil to obtain more powers from the king, was prevented from disembarking when he returned, and retired to Britain to take up a new and politically less hazardous post in 1821, as Governor of Jersey. After lengthy negotiations, the Portuguese revolutionaries implemented a radical constitution in 1822. A parliament was elected, restoring the monarchy but according it only limited powers, broadening civil rights, and abolishing feudal restrictions on free enterprise within Portugal, while attempting at the same time to reimpose mercantilist regulations on trade with Brazil. This prompted, as we have seen, the separation of Brazil from Portugal. However, the French intervention in Spain led in 1823 to a military coup in which a young brigadier, João Saldanha (1790–1876), raised a small army and marched on Lisbon, dissolved the parliament, and promulgated a new constitution that gave increased powers to the king, João VI (1767–1826). This settled nothing, however, since the king aroused widespread resentment among the liberals by inviting Beresford back to serve as his personal adviser, while Saldanha's attempts at a compromise failed to satisfy the conservatives, who regarded him with suspicion as a leading figure in the Freemasons. Saldanha's coup was enough to forestall a French invasion, but it stoked the fires of conflict in Portugal, which were to break out in open civil war a few years later in a conflict that was ostensibly dynastic in character but which in fact had much deeper roots.

In Russia, a younger generation of army officers had imbibed French Revolutionary ideas during the wars and the occupation of France in 1815. As in other countries, Freemasonry exerted an influence in Russia, with its emphasis on humanity and philanthropy and the possibilities of open discussion behind closed doors. Some European liberals were well known to the Russian elite, and a number of Russian army officers had taken up contact with the Swiss *carbonari*. In February 1816 a group of them formed a 'Union of Salvation', in which young Guards officers from noble families discussed ideas like the abolition of serfdom and public trial in open court instead of the secret proceedings customary in Russia. In February 1817 the Union became the Union of Welfare and set up an elaborate organization, some of whose members composed drafts of a new constitution for Russia loosely based on the Constitution of the USA. A few, notably Pavel Pestel (1793–1826), a young colonel who had been wounded in 1812 at the Battle of Borodino during the Napoleonic invasion, went further and advocated the removal of titles and privileges from the nobility and the abolition of poverty by the nationalization of land. Pestel wanted a Russian republic headed by a unicameral legislature and administered centrally. His liberalism did not extend to non-Russian parts of the tsar's dominions, including Finland, the Baltic states, Georgia, the Caucasus, Belarus and the Ukraine; all subject nationalities, he believed, should be merged into the Russian nation apart from the Poles, who were entitled to a limited degree of independence. (Indeed, the autonomous, constitutional status of Congress Poland was one of the factors influencing the group, for if Poland could be granted a constitution, then why not Russia?)

By 1823 the group had been joined by another radical secret organization, the Society of United Slavs, whose twenty-five members were also mostly aristocratic and upper-class army officers. They laid plans to arrest or even assassinate the tsar as a prelude to revolution. But on 19 November 1825 Alexander I died, leaving no legitimate son. To the consternation of the revolutionaries, he was not succeeded by his brother the Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich (1779–1831), who was next in line to the throne and enjoyed – with how much justification is uncertain – a liberal reputation. Konstantin had married a Polish countess and decided to stay in Poland, renouncing his claim to the Russian throne. The succession thus passed to the youngest of the three brothers, Nicholas, who also had a son and therefore promised a continuation of the Romanov dynasty. Nicholas I (1796–1855) had a well-deserved reputation as a reactionary, which strengthened the conspirators' determination to act. Made aware by an informer of the conspiracy, he hurriedly had himself proclaimed tsar, on

14 December 1825, thus trumping the revolutionaries' attempt to forestall his succession by staging a coup. Mustering 3,000 troops on the Senate Square in Moscow, the revolutionaries shot dead an intermediary sent by the tsar, who then ordered his own troops, some 9,000 in number, to open fire. The revolutionary forces fled the scene. Another, smaller uprising further south was dispersed on 3 January 1826. The so-called 'revolt' was over. Nicholas set up a commission of inquiry, which examined 600 people and put 121 on trial, condemning five of them to death, including Pestel, thirty-one to exile with hard labour in Siberia, and eighty-five to shorter terms of imprisonment.

The rebels went down in history as the 'Decembrists'. Like similar groups in other European countries in the 1820s, they were young army officers drawn from the upper classes. They aimed at a military coup, but they were also intellectuals, influenced by their experience of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and inspired by democratic and egalitarian ideas. As in other countries, too, secret societies derived from, or inspired by, Freemasonry were the preferred means of discussing and preparing a revolt. They caused a huge amount of alarm in Europe's chancelleries. Metternich called them 'a real power, all the more dangerous as it works in the dark, undermining all parts of the social body, and depositing everywhere the seeds of a moral gangrene which is not slow to develop and increase'. Only close co-operation between the Great Powers of Europe, Metternich told Alexander I in December 1820, could ward off the threat. Conservative writers blamed the revolution of 1789 on secret societies such as the *carbonari*. 'Among peoples which are sick,' remarked one of them in 1815, 'you find conspiracies.' The Habsburg government required all civil servants to swear an oath that they did not belong to any secret society. Paranoia was rife. In 1814 the Habsburg Emperor Franz I even asked for a report on tiepins he had seen men wearing during his visit to Florence, fearing they were some kind of secret sign of Freemasonry. His agents tried to collect information from all over Europe, and built up an alarming picture of a vast international network of subversives. The fact that some of them used names – Masons, *carbonari* – that transcended national boundaries seemed to confirm these suspicions. At the century's mid-point, the English politician and novelist Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81) could still put forward the view that the secret societies 'cover Europe like a network': 'Acting in unison with a great popular movement they may destroy society, as they did at the end of the last century', he warned in his usual melodramatic manner.

These views were exaggerated in the extreme. Nineteenth-century states had less to fear from revolutionary conspiracies than they did from

fear itself. These anxieties reflected, among other things, Metternich's desire to find a justification for internationally co-ordinated repression, and Disraeli's incurable tendency to romanticism. True, there were contacts between some individuals involved in the secret societies in various countries, but they did not amount to anything by way of a coherent or co-ordinated organization. The wave of military revolutionary conspiracies had receded in most of Europe by 1823; the revolt of the Decembrists in 1825 was a kind of coda. Nevertheless, the secret societies were in some ways the first, halting, embryonic example of an international revolutionary movement, inspired by similar ideas and committed to similar methods, derived from the French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon, the feeble mirror image of the international conservatism propagated by Metternich and the Holy Alliance. Politics had become internationalized by 1815 as a result of the upheavals of the previous decades. Virtually every European country had been invaded and occupied by foreign armies, and had in turn sent its troops to invade and occupy others. This development was to emerge again and again, in increasingly stronger and more coherent forms, as the century progressed.

Of course, there were national peculiarities as well. In Britain it was not junior officers who conspired to overthrow the government but a group of Jacobins who called themselves the Spencean Philanthropists, after Thomas Spence (1750–1814), an opponent of the enclosure of common land who advocated universal male suffrage and the end of the landed aristocracy. Led by Arthur Thistlewood (1774–1820), who had been involved in the Spa Fields riots in 1816, when the Spenceans had planned to use a mass meeting to storm the Tower of London, they tried to use the death of George III (1738–1820) to stage an uprising, rather as the Decembrists were to do with the death of the tsar a few years later. Their intention was to interrupt a Cabinet dinner and kill everyone present; one of the conspirators boasted that he would decapitate them all and exhibit two of their heads on Westminster Bridge. This would, the conspirators imagined, spark a general uprising against the government, and they would go on to establish a Committee of Public Safety on the lines of the French revolutionaries of the early 1790s. However, the mass assassination had in fact been concocted by a member of the group, George Edwards (1788–1843), who had turned police spy and was acting as an *agent provocateur*. He betrayed the plot to the Home Office, who raided the conspirators' headquarters in Cato Street. In the ensuing fight, Thistlewood put one of the police officers to the sword, but while a few of the conspirators escaped, most were arrested, and ten were tried for treason. Five of them were transported for life, while on 1 May 1820 the other five, including Thistlewood,

14 December 1825, thus trumping the revolutionaries' attempt to forestall his succession by staging a coup. Mustering 3,000 troops on the Senate Square in Moscow, the revolutionaries shot dead an intermediary sent by the tsar, who then ordered his own troops, some 9,000 in number, to open fire. The revolutionary forces fled the scene. Another, smaller uprising further south was dispersed on 3 January 1826. The so-called 'revolt' was over. Nicholas set up a commission of inquiry, which examined 600 people and put 121 on trial, condemning five of them to death, including Pestel, thirty-one to exile with hard labour in Siberia, and eighty-five to shorter terms of imprisonment.

The rebels went down in history as the 'Decembrists'. Like similar groups in other European countries in the 1820s, they were young army officers drawn from the upper classes. They aimed at a military coup, but they were also intellectuals, influenced by their experience of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and inspired by democratic and egalitarian ideas. As in other countries, too, secret societies derived from, or inspired by, Freemasonry were the preferred means of discussing and preparing a revolt. They caused a huge amount of alarm in Europe's chancelleries. Metternich called them 'a real power, all the more dangerous as it works in the dark, undermining all parts of the social body, and depositing everywhere the seeds of a moral gangrene which is not slow to develop and increase'. Only close co-operation between the Great Powers of Europe, Metternich told Alexander I in December 1820, could ward off the threat. Conservative writers blamed the revolution of 1789 on secret societies such as the *carbonari*. 'Among peoples which are sick,' remarked one of them in 1815, 'you find conspiracies.' The Habsburg government required all civil servants to swear an oath that they did not belong to any secret society. Paranoia was rife. In 1814 the Habsburg Emperor Franz I even asked for a report on tiepins he had seen men wearing during his visit to Florence, fearing they were some kind of secret sign of Freemasonry. His agents tried to collect information from all over Europe, and built up an alarming picture of a vast international network of subversives. The fact that some of them used names – Masons, *carbonari* – that transcended national boundaries seemed to confirm these suspicions. At the century's mid-point, the English politician and novelist Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81) could still put forward the view that the secret societies 'cover Europe like a network': 'Acting in unison with a great popular movement they may destroy society, as they did at the end of the last century', he warned in his usual melodramatic manner.

These views were exaggerated in the extreme. Nineteenth-century states had less to fear from revolutionary conspiracies than they did from fear itself. These anxieties reflected, among other things, Metternich's desire to find a justification for internationally co-ordinated repression, and Disraeli's incurable tendency to romanticism. True, there were contacts between some individuals involved in the secret societies in various countries, but they did not amount to anything by way of a coherent or co-ordinated organization. The wave of military revolutionary conspiracies had receded in most of Europe by 1823; the revolt of the Decembrists in 1825 was a kind of coda. Nevertheless, the secret societies were in some ways the first, halting, embryonic example of an international revolutionary movement, inspired by similar ideas and committed to similar methods, derived from the French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon, the feeble mirror image of the international conservatism propagated by Metternich and the Holy Alliance. Politics had become internationalized by 1815 as a result of the upheavals of the previous decades. Virtually every European country had been invaded and occupied by foreign armies, and had in turn sent its troops to invade and occupy others. This development was to emerge again and again, in increasingly stronger and more coherent forms, as the century progressed.

Of course, there were national peculiarities as well. In Britain it was not junior officers who conspired to overthrow the government but a group of Jacobins who called themselves the Spencean Philanthropists, after Thomas Spence (1750–1814), an opponent of the enclosure of common land who advocated universal male suffrage and the end of the landed aristocracy. Led by Arthur Thistlewood (1774–1820), who had been involved in the Spa Fields riots in 1816, when the Spenceans had planned to use a mass meeting to storm the Tower of London, they tried to use the death of George III (1738–1820) to stage an uprising, rather as the Decembrists were to do with the death of the tsar a few years later. Their intention was to interrupt a Cabinet dinner and kill everyone present; one of the conspirators boasted that he would decapitate them all and exhibit two of their heads on Westminster Bridge. This would, the conspirators imagined, spark a general uprising against the government, and they would go on to establish a Committee of Public Safety on the lines of the French revolutionaries of the early 1790s. However, the mass assassination had in fact been concocted by a member of the group, George Edwards (1788–1843), who had turned police spy and was acting as an *agent provocateur*. He betrayed the plot to the Home Office, who raided the conspirators' headquarters in Cato Street. In the ensuing fight, Thistlewood put one of the police officers to the sword, but while a few of the conspirators escaped, most were arrested, and ten were tried for treason. Five of them were transported for life, while on 1 May 1820 the other five, including Thistlewood,

were publicly hanged then cut down and beheaded (an act that called forth loud boos from the vast crowd of onlookers).

The Cato Street conspirators were unusual in the sense that they were civilians rather than military men, but in other respects they were typical of the revolutionary groups of the early 1820s. Even more than their counterparts in Britain, Spain or Italy, the Russian Decembrists, for all their egalitarian ideals, were largely cut off from the rest of society, aristocratic in origin but democratic in spirit, looking to broaden the basis of politics but unable to gain the support that would enable them to do so. The absence of a genuine civil society in Russia condemned the Decembrists to using the traditional means of a military coup to try and put their ideas into practice. Elsewhere in Europe, a military coup was also the favoured means of deposing Restoration regimes. But where a public sphere had emerged in the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the involvement of civilian members of the educated classes – lawyers, doctors, teachers, merchants – in revolutionary activity was greater than in Russia. Where, as in Sicily, they were threatened by the revolt of the masses, they quickly turned back from radical action. The example of the Jacobins in the French Revolution of 1789–94, whose alliance with the plebeian forces of the *sans-culottes* had ended by plunging the country into the Reign of Terror, was sufficient to deter educated liberal groups from enlisting the common people in their support after 1815, unless they had no choice in the matter. The most widespread rioting of the Restoration years, the 'Hep-Hep' disturbances of 1819, had, it is true, involved members of the educated classes as well as artisans and other members of the lower classes, but the antisemitic focus of these disturbances repelled many liberals, and the rioters' attacks on property alarmed Metternich, who saw them as a serious threat to public order: wherever they broke out, he wrote in 1819, 'no security exists, for the same thing could arise again at any moment over any other matter'. Middle-class liberals largely shared this view. Their fear of the unruly masses was to reappear later in the century, with serious repercussions for revolutionaries.

THE GENDARME OF EUROPE

Of all the regimes established or re-established in the post-1815 Restoration, the most conservative was undoubtedly that of Tsar Nicholas I in Russia. A professional soldier, with a reputation as a stern disciplinarian, he was married to a Prussian princess and admired the institutions of the

country from which she came. He spoke a number of foreign languages, and had visited England, France and Scotland, but he rejected the political and legal systems of these countries as unsuited for emulation in his own. Liberal intellectuals saw him as a sinister figure, and certainly the revolt of the Decembrists with which his reign began coloured Nicholas's attitudes towards reform for the rest of his life. Even more than his predecessor Alexander I, he was determined to nip any revolutionary conspiracy in the bud. Nicholas's hero was Peter the Great (1672–1725), whose bust he kept on his desk, telling an official: 'Here is the model which I intend to follow for the whole of my reign.'

As soon as he acceded to the throne, the new tsar reshaped his administration, centralizing power in his personal Imperial Chancery, of which the First Department was his own secretariat; the Second codified the law under the leadership of Speransky; and the Fourth dealt with aspects of education. Count Sergei Semyonovich Uvarov (1786–1855), Nicholas's Education Minister for sixteen years, wanted universities to curb 'excessive impulses towards the abstract, in the misty field of politics and philosophy' and to train students to resist 'so-called European ideas'. The aim of education was, he said, to provide a 'deep conviction and warm faith in the truly Russian saving principles of Autocracy, Orthodoxy and the National Principle, which constitute the sheet-anchor of our salvation and the most faithful pledge of the strength and greatness of our country'. At the same time, Uvarov expanded the universities and oversaw a modest growth in the school system. He reformed university administration and encouraged the study of both the sciences and the ancient Classics. Uvarov might have been reactionary, but he was not obscurantist; his higher education policy laid the foundations for the emergence of that peculiarly Russian social stratum, the intelligentsia, in the 1840s and 1850s.

The Third Department of the Imperial Chancery, responsible for state security, was run by the former cavalry general Count Alexander von Benckendorff (1781–1844), a Baltic German nobleman and brother of the international socialite Dorothea von Lieven (1785–1857), who had once enjoyed notoriety in a much-publicized affair with Metternich. (Princess Lieven ran a celebrated *salon* in London for twenty-two years while her husband served as Russian ambassador.) Benckendorff was also head of the gendarmerie, so that the Third Department, in effect, was responsible for the police. It was armed with the power to collect 'reports on all events without exception', to carry out surveillance of politically suspect persons – two thousand a year on average in the 1840s – and banish them to Siberia, and to supervise all foreigners who came to the country. Frequently officials in the Third Department fabricated cases or acted

uncritically on false denunciations. It employed an army of informers, one of whom reported complaints from the public about its intrusiveness: 'Do you not know,' one bureaucrat was reported as asking the informer menacingly, 'how General Benckendorff treats people and what measures he adopts to unearth family secrets?'

The Third Department was charged with uncovering corruption in the bureaucracy; one bureaucrat described it disapprovingly as a 'black cloud' that 'rose over Russia and . . . lay on her horizon for many years'. For its part, the Third Department reported in 1827 that among officials, 'honest people are seldom met. Plunder, fraud, perverse interpretation of the laws – these are their trade.' Benckendorff's deputy and effective successor, Leonid Vasilievich Dubbelt (1792–1862), another veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, struck terror into all who came within his orbit, not least because of the elaborate courtesy with which he treated his victims. When the writer and critic Alexander Ivanovich Herzen (1812–70) complained to him of the mess the gendarmes had made when they searched his house, Dubbelt exclaimed, 'Oh, my goodness, how unpleasant! How clumsy they all are!' His politeness did not stop him informing Herzen that he was being exiled to Vyatka, a small town in north-eastern Russia, for his involvement in criticism of the government. While the Third Department kept a tight rein on political dissidents, however, it failed altogether to eliminate inefficiency and corruption, not least because they went to the very heart of government. Count Pyotr Alexandrovich Tolstoy (1761–1844), the head of the military department of the Council of State, was described by the Council's Imperial Secretary as 'combining an indescribable indifference to all official business with an exemplary, legendary laziness'. The Governor of St Petersburg, Pyotr Kirillovich Essen (1772–1844), neglected his office so much that he did not notice his Head of Chancery was taking bribes and embezzling public funds until the scandal came to light in 1843. The Third Department also exercised censorship over the theatre. In 1836, when Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol (1809–52) presented his satirical play *The Government Inspector*, focusing on the mayor of a provincial town who mistakes a chance visitor for a government inspector and tries both to cover up his own corruption and placate the visitor with massive 'loans', the tsar personally overruled the censors and had it staged as a warning to officialdom. Censorship was enshrined in a statute promulgated in 1826 and revised in 1828, backed by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church. Although the effects of the statute were mitigated because some of the officials were closet liberals, the tsar or some other senior figure was always liable to intervene to demand the closure of a magazine or the arrest of a writer. Arbitrariness always accompanies

despotism, and Russia was no exception. But for all its inefficiency, Nicholas I's regime managed to keep the lid on dissent, for which there was no institutional outlet such as an elected legislature, only novels, drama and poetry, which were easily muzzled. Nicholas I, as Queen Victoria remarked, was 'sincere even in his most despotic acts, from a sense that is the only way to govern'. It would not be until his death in 1855 that the permafrost of Russian politics would begin to thaw.

Extending Russian power, as Peter the Great had done, was one of Nicholas I's primary aims. He pursued it not least in the interests of order. The tsar was as determined as Peter had been to use Russia's military might to suppress revolution in other parts of Europe. He upheld the ideals of the Holy Alliance and continued to participate in the Congress system. In his zeal to prevent revolution, Nicholas soon became known as the 'gendarme of Europe'. He justified this sobriquet not least as a result of the way he dealt with the events that unfolded in Poland. His predecessor Alexander I, influenced by his friendship with the Polish grandee Adam Czartoryski (1770–1861), had left intact many of the reforms introduced by Napoleon through his creation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, hoping that these would placate Polish opinion. (Some 85,000 Poles had served in Napoleon's Grand Army in 1812, and the establishment of the Grand Duchy had excited many Polish aristocrats who saw in it the chance to recover their country's sovereignty, lost as recently as 1795.) 'Congress Poland' had a constitution of its own with its Diet and administration, its own taxes, and even its own army. One Russian official called it disapprovingly 'a snake spouting its venom at us', clearly fearing that the poison of democracy might infect the Russian body politic.

After Alexander's death in 1825, Nicholas I put increasing pressure on the Russian viceroy in Poland, his brother the Grand Duke Konstantin, to curtail what he regarded as these excessive liberties. He was strengthened in his resolve by the discovery that the Decembrists had been in contact with a secret society in Warsaw, one of many that had sprung up in the early 1820s, closely connected to the Freemasons who already had thirty-two lodges in Congress Poland in 1815. The tsarist police broke up some of the early groups, which had names such as the National Patriotic Society or the League of Free Poles, though their support came almost entirely from junior officers in the Polish army, and from students. At the University of Vilna, once part of the old Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania but now in Russia, beyond the Polish border, a nationalist conspiracy was broken up by the police in 1823 and its leader Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) exiled to central Russia. Five years later, the tsar's enquiries prompted the trial for treason of leading figures in the Patriotic Society, and when the

judges declared them not guilty (apart from Lieutenant-Colonel Seweryn Krzyzanowski [1787–1839], who had carried on dealings with the Decembrists), Konstantin had the judges arrested while Nicholas I ordered the conspirators to be transported to Siberia in chains. Matters were made worse by the requirement of all officers in the Polish army to renew their oath of allegiance to the tsar.

Following the Decembrist revolt a small group of liberal army officers came together in 1830 at the infantry officers' school in Warsaw, with a view to seizing power. They were galvanized into action by Nicholas I's orders to mobilize Russian forces to stop the overthrow of the monarchy in France. As the conspirators gained more adherents, a group of them burst into the viceroy's palace on the night of 28–29 November 1830. Finding a gaudily uniformed man at the entrance to the Grand Duke's suite, they stabbed him to death, then rushed into the streets shouting 'The Grand Duke is dead!' They were mistaken: they had in fact killed the Governor of Warsaw – the Grand Duke had been hiding in his wife's bedroom. As senior officers tried to restore order, calling the conspirators 'ignorant murderers', they were shot dead, and the conspirators seized control of the town and its munitions depots. Instead of using his troops to crush the conspiracy, the Grand Duke withdrew from the city in panic, taking with him the prisoners whom the tsar had ordered to be transported after the fiasco of the 1828 show trial. 'The Poles have started this disturbance,' he declared, 'and it's Poles that must stop it.' Attempts by moderates to negotiate with the tsar met with a predictable, blanket refusal to make any concessions, driving the rebellion into the hands of the most radical faction in the Diet. After commemorating the memory of the Decembrists on 24 January 1831, they persuaded the Diet to depose the tsar the next day and issue a declaration of independence.

Afraid of compromising their own social and economic position, the mainly aristocratic radicals rejected the idea of rousing the peasantry to back their cause by introducing agrarian reform. Meanwhile, the tsar had already mobilized an army 120,000 strong to crush the uprising. They were dealing not only with professional and well-organized Polish forces, however, but also with a raging cholera epidemic they had brought with them from further east. In the fierce fighting that ensued, the Poles won several significant victories. But they failed to follow them up. Despite their imaginative deployment of rockets, the Poles were decisively defeated at Ostrołęka on 26 May 1831, and divisions among the leading Poles hastened the disintegration of the revolt. Their principal commander, General Jan Skrzynecki (1787–1860) met with bitter criticism for his dilatory tactics. Failing to persuade the Diet to make him dictator, he arrested

his critics and several military rivals and put them on trial. On 15 August the Diet deposed him amid chaotic scenes in Warsaw, where a crowd broke into the prisons and massacred thirty-four inmates, including four generals. The Polish army responded by taking control of the streets, shooting the alleged ringleaders and breaking down the barricades thrown up by the rebels across the streets. While the Poles were tearing themselves apart, the Russian army arrived at the gates of Warsaw, where the defenders had thrown up earthworks and assembled a defensive force of 40,000. It was all to no avail. In two days of fierce fighting the vastly superior Russian force overwhelmed the defences and entered the city at the Wola churchyard, where the corpse of the local Polish commander, General Józef Sowiński (1777–1831), a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, was later found, riddled with bayonet wounds, propped upright against a gun carriage by his wooden leg. The revolt was over, the last remnants of the rebellion surrendering on 21 October.

The tsar now exacted his retribution. All Polish officers involved in the uprising were cashiered and transported to central Russia while the rank and file were marched off to serve in the Caucasus. About 100,000 men were punished in this way. Another 80,000 Polish citizens who had supported the revolt were also transported. Some 254 men were condemned to death. More than 5,000 landed properties were sequestered in Poland and Lithuania. 'Order a search to be made in Warsaw,' commanded Tsar Nicholas, 'for all the flags and standards of our former Polish Army and send them to me ... Remove everything that has historical or national value, and deliver it here.' Nicholas abolished the Polish constitution, along with the Diet and the army, brought Russians in to run the administration, and ruled henceforth by military decree. The universities were closed down and the library was seized. From 1839 study abroad was banned, the publication of books on history and social studies was halted, the works of national poets were suppressed. So angry was the tsar at the uprising that at one stage he even proposed to wash his hands of the Poles by ceding all their territory to Austria and Prussia. Although his ministers calmed him down, the legacy of the conflict was a new bitterness in relations between Poland and Russia, equally vehement on both sides. Nicholas eventually contented himself with abolishing the provincial administrative structure of the Kingdom. He replaced the Polish złoty with the Russian rouble, and, in 1849, causing enormous confusion, he introduced Russian weights and measures in place of Polish ones. The imprisoned rebels were not forgiven, and many were still in jail or exile in Siberia a quarter of a century later. Despite the massive repression, Polish nationalism survived, to resurface on many occasions later in the century.

The Poles lost because of their isolation from the masses. A small group of army officers, supported by students and intellectuals, had attempted to seize power. Unlike the Decembrists they had managed to win the support of large numbers of ordinary soldiers, and a part of the artisan class, driven to revolt by poor economic conditions and the feeling that these owed a lot to Russian exactions. What the rebels really needed was to rouse the peasantry, that is, the overwhelming mass of the population. Some of them realized this. But an attempt to introduce land reform into the legislature disappeared without trace in the face of the indifference of the landowning majority. The peasants remained quiescent, and the uprising a purely urban phenomenon. This had been an essentially internal affair as far as the tsar was concerned. There was no involvement on the part of the other European Powers, although the Polish conspirators had tried to get Austria to intervene. The repercussions of the revolt within Europe, however, were at a different level. Liberal opinion everywhere was outraged. The events of 1830–1 inaugurated a long period of Russophobia in Britain. The House of Commons passed a unanimous vote of censure on the tsar. In Germany popular songs condemning the enslavement of Poland were in vogue for a time. The Russian poet Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799–1837) responded with a diatribe against 'the slanderers of Russia', accusing critics abroad of feelings of envy because they had done less than the Russians to overthrow Napoleon. It was, he declared, a quarrel between Slavs. That was not the way it was seen in the rest of Europe, where anything up to 7,000 Poles fled during or after the uprising. One of them was the composer Fryderyk Chopin (1810–49), who had left Warsaw just before the rebellion and was never to return. From Stuttgart he wrote helplessly to his father after the fall of Warsaw: 'The enemy must have reached our home. The suburbs must have been stormed and burned ... Oh, why could I not kill a single Muscovite!'

In crushing the Polish uprising, Tsar Nicholas I had flagrantly defied the Vienna Settlement, which had granted Congress Poland a substantial degree of autonomy. But in another sense he was upholding the Settlement: its central thrust, against the threat of revolution, implied that anyone who acted to maintain order was acting in the spirit that had inspired it. Although Russia had acted alone in the case of Poland, however, the tsar strongly preferred to act in concert with other European states in time of trouble, especially in cases where the problems did not arise in his own backyard. Yet Russian collaboration and co-operation in the maintenance of the post-1815 European order could run up against the divergent interests of even the most conservative states elsewhere on the Continent. This

was to become abundantly clear over the most serious issue to confront the Concert of Europe in the 1820s, the question of Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE

Like so many other European rulers of the period, the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II (1785–1839) had observed with admiration the effectiveness of Napoleon's rule in France. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire still controlled a large swathe of territory in south-eastern Europe, stretching from the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia across to Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro, and down through Bulgaria and Albania to Greece and the islands of the Aegean. Also controlling Anatolia, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, the Arabian peninsula, Egypt, and the north coast of Africa as far west as Tunis, the Ottoman Empire remained a force to be reckoned with in European politics. It was still not much more than a century since Ottoman armies had laid siege to Vienna (1683). However, the reorientation of European trade from the Middle East to the Atlantic, and the acceleration of economic growth in western Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century, were beginning to leave the Ottoman economy behind. Organizational and technological improvements in western armies and navies meant they were starting to outperform Ottoman forces. The corruption characteristic of eighteenth-century government and administration had been curtailed in most of Europe, but it continued among the Ottomans. In Constantinople (Istanbul), the Ottoman capital, the sultans found it increasingly difficult to impose their authority. Local and regional leaders were gaining increasing autonomy in many parts of the empire.

One such was Tepedelenli Ali Pasha (1740–1822), a retired Muslim brigand who controlled a large area of territory stretching from the Peloponnese and mainland Greece across Macedonia into Albania (from where he originally hailed). Appointed 'Pasha', or Ottoman administrator, in 1788, he levied taxes on his own account and ruled by violence and extortion. Famously avaricious and sybaritic, by 1819 he had become so fat that he could no longer sit in the traditional fashion cross-legged on the floor. However, the pasha had come to enjoy more autonomy than Mahmud was prepared to tolerate. By 1820 some 20,000 Ottoman troops were besieging his headquarters at Ioannina, where his resistance proved so stubborn that reinforcements had to be sent from garrisons in the Peloponnese. Looking around for allies, the pasha established contact